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New York

President:	Mr. Fall	(Guinea)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Miranda
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Ngoubeyou
	Chile	Mr. Valdés
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Spain	Mr. Arias
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa.

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03-28391 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo to participate in our discussion.

On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Pierre Osho, Minister of State for Defence of Benin, His Excellency Mr. Jean-De-Dieu Somda, Minister assigned to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso in charge of Regional Cooperation, His Excellency Mr. Baboucarr-Blaise Ismaila Jagne, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Gambia, His Excellency Mr. Monie Captan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liberia, His Excellency Mr. Cheick Tidiane Gadio, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal, His Excellency Mr. Roland Y. Kpotsra, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Togo, and Her Excellency Ms. Diallo Mbodji Senn, Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of Mali. I invite all the aforementioned Ministers to take the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

I also invite the representatives of Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone to take the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Said Djinnit, Interim Commissioner for Peace, Security and Political Affairs of the African Union, to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Nana Effah-Apenteng, representative of the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States, to take a seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ibrahima Sall, Regional Director, Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on the agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Before opening the floor, I wish to request all participants to limit their statements to no more than seven minutes, in order to enable the Council to work efficiently within its timetable. I thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

I welcome the presence among us of the Secretary-General. Before giving him the floor, I would like to express my deep thanks to the Ministers and their representatives, the representative of Interim Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States and the Regional Director of the Programme for Cooperation and Assistance for Security and Development. Despite of their heavy workload, these people agreed to come to participate in this important workshop, which is being held in particularly difficult circumstances, with greater Security Council activity due to current concerns, in particular the Iraqi crisis. I am convinced that in spite of those challenges, our work will proceed in a spirit of calm and cooperation.

I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I would like to thank the Security Council for focusing its attention, even at this critical moment when all our minds are on Iraq, on a subject which is of great importance to the welfare and well-being of millions of people in another region of the world, namely West Africa.

The uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries sustain conflict, exacerbate violence, fuel crime and terrorism, promote cultures of violence, violate international humanitarian law and impede political, economic and social development.

The easy availability of small arms and light weapons is strongly linked with the dramatic rise in the victimization of women and children and with the phenomenon of child soldiers. Light automatic weapons can be carried and fired by children as young as nine or ten. This link is particularly evident in West Africa, where the conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and now Côte d'Ivoire have been fuelled in no small part by an unregulated trade in small arms — often paid for with the proceeds from the illicit exploitation of natural resources.

The flood of arms in the region has been accompanied by — and, indeed, has facilitated — a rise in the activities of mercenaries. Armed men from within the subregion and beyond have moved across borders: a large force of fighters, unemployed but armed and willing to fight for whomever will pay them most. This supply side of the mercenary problem is closely linked, in turn, to the failure to adequately fund and implement disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and to the failure to provide enough assistance to countries such as Liberia and Guinea-Bissau in restructuring their armed forces as part of post-conflict peace-building arrangements. The result in Liberia, for example, is that tens of thousands of former combatants face little or no prospect of gainful employment, leaving them more susceptible to recruitment as combatants once again.

The actions of unscrupulous and predatory arms merchants also bear special mention. Their lack of restraint in the sale and transfer of their products to zones of tension in West Africa and beyond directly translates into more unnecessary suffering and instability.

The problem is easy to diagnose. The more complex challenge is to mount an effective response. Fortunately, the international community and the countries concerned are not without tools with which to fight back.

Legal instruments and other international agreements offer one such avenue.

The Programme of Action on Small Arms, adopted by the international community in 2001, offers a blueprint for action at all levels, including such steps as increased cooperation with Interpol and the World Customs Organization.

The International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries came into force in October 2001; I urge all West African countries to join Mauritania, Mali, Senegal and Togo in ratifying this vital instrument.

This Council has demanded that countries in the Mano River Union cease military support for armed groups in neighbouring countries and refrain from any actions that might contribute to destabilization of the situation on their borders. The Council has also imposed arms embargoes, another essential step.

The heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States, for their part, have agreed to work more intensively towards making the region a child-soldier-free zone and have put in place a moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms in the region. To support the moratorium, the United Nations Development Programme has been helping the countries involved to strengthen controls at border posts, to establish arms registers, to build up the capacity of national monitoring commissions and to carry out collections and destructions of illicit arms.

This is just one example of the many steps that are being taken by the United Nations system at the operational level and on the ground. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and the United Nations peace-building office in Liberia are helping those countries address not only questions of small arms but the full range of post-conflict reconstruction and development tasks. The United Nations is also leading peace-building efforts in Guinea-Bissau. And of course, the economic and social development efforts being carried out by the entire United Nations system — to improve education and health, to create jobs, to promote good governance and respect for human rights — will necessarily have a supportive impact on efforts to demilitarize the societies involved.

Unless adequately addressed, the proliferation of small arms and mercenaries will continue to pose a severe threat to the region's hopes of attaining durable peace and security. Spillover effects from one country to the next have been all too common, underscoring the need for regional cooperation and a comprehensive

approach. The Council's own panels of experts on Sierra Leone and Liberia have reported as much and offered a range of valuable recommendations.

I urge you all to do your utmost to bring the countries of the region to build up the capacity to address this issue. I urge the countries involved, and in particular the leaders, to focus more intently on this very real and very present threat to peace.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his kind words addressed to me. The first speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Said Djinnit, Interim Commissioner for Peace, Security and Political Affairs of the African Union.

Mr. Djinnit (*spoke in French*): I would first like to present the apologies of Mr. Amara Essy, the Interim Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, who was not able to attend this meeting in New York due to other pressing engagements on the continent. He has entrusted me with representing him in this meeting and with transmitting his greetings to the participants.

Mr. President, I would like to congratulate your country, Guinea, on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March, at this crucial moment in which great stakes are the focus of the entire international community, putting the Security Council to the test.

Finally, I wish to express our appreciation for having kept all the African questions on the Council agenda, despite a strong temptation to marginalize them in favour of more burning current events. Thank you for having kept the world's conscience focused on the critical problems of the African continent.

For many years, the dangerous phenomenon of mercenaries and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons have been the focus of African leaders' concerns. Because they are intrinsically linked to all acts of political destabilization, serious banditry and cross-border crime, these phenomena have compromised all efforts for sustainable development on the continent and have ushered in massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. It is worth noting that the massive proliferation of small arms and light weapons has coincided with the emergence of non-State actors that have become key parties in most African conflicts.

West Africa in particular has paid a heavy debt in this crisis, and it is very natural that the leaders of this region have spearheaded the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Lights Weapons, adopted in 1998, and the code of conduct for its implementation, which followed a year later, demonstrates the resolve of West African countries to promote sustainable solutions to conflicts that ravage the region. The other African regions will follow the example of West Africa and the continent will ultimately build on those gains by adopting the Bamako Declaration on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, which was a source of inspiration for the United Nations Plan of Action adopted in July 2001, despite the substantial differences — it must be emphasized — between the two documents, particularly on the terms of transfer of weapons to non-State actors.

Furthermore, this traffic in light weapons fuels cross-border crime and terrorism, which, particularly since 11 September 2001, has been the focus of collective and concerted action by the international community. Africa was also aware of risks and had adopted, in July 1999, a Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. That was later supplemented by a plan of action drafted by a high level intergovernmental meeting in Algiers that brings together the crucial elements of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and the modalities for the implementation of the Convention.

Regarding mercenarism specifically, I wish to point out that the Organization of African Unity articulated a prescriptive response in the form of a Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa, which was adopted in 1977 and entered into force on 22 April 1985. This phenomenon, which held sway in Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, has re-emerged in West Africa as a result of instability, areas of tension and the availability of small arms. In recent years it has been aggravated by the activities of private corporations specializing in providing security services to multinational corporations in high-risk mining areas and to Governments confronted with armed rebellion.

It cannot be denied that the proliferation of light weapons, combined with the activity of mercenaries, constitutes a factor of political and social instability and is an obstacle to the economic development efforts of our States. The essential question is why, despite the

existence of a significant amount of legislation, these scourges continue to persist on our continent.

It is worth noting first that the best conventions and programmes will not be effective as long as sufficient political will does not exist on the part of the signatory States to implement the provisions contained therein.

Over and above political will, States must endow themselves with the necessary mechanisms and means to implement their collective decisions. Thus, a moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of weapons can only work if there is a follow-up and monitoring mechanism that is truly independent and has the necessary means that will allow it to identify and cite violators. In addition, there must be a sanctions regime against noncompliant parties, whose principle is envisaged in the charter of the African Union. Efforts under way to set up the African Peer Review Mechanism should help in the implementation of the decisions and commitments of States members of the African Union.

Finally, it must be recalled that while the ready availability of weapons and the use of mercenaries aggravate conflict situations within a State increase the risks of explosion of already fragile inter-State relations and add to war atrocities, the underlying causes of tensions and conflicts that tear our societies apart and poison inter-State relations can be found in most cases in the weakness of the democratic culture, discrimination against minorities, lack of respect for rights and freedoms and the marginalization of entire strata of populations. In other words, the challenge of good governance is at the core of our quest for peace and security in Africa.

Those were the comments I wished to make, and I express my wishes for the full success of this meeting.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Interim Commissioner for Peace, Security and Political Affairs of the African Union for his encouraging words addressed to my country.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is His Excellency Mr. Nana Effah-Apenteng, representative of the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Economic Community of West African States): I wish to join previous speakers in congratulating the sister Republic of Guinea on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month.

I wish to make a few remarks on behalf of my Minister, the Honourable Hackman Owusu-Agyemang, who is unable to be here. In his absence, he has requested me to bring to the members of the Council greetings from the President of the Republic of Ghana and current Chairman of ECOWAS, His Excellency Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, who has expressed his confidence in this workshop and hopes that it will propose measures that will assist in curbing the menace of the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons, as well as the rising phenomenon of mercenaries and private armies in the West African subregion.

I wish to commend the organizers of this workshop for the appropriateness of the topic, considering the conflict situations in the West African subregion and the very relevant objectives of this workshop.

Although the issue of the proliferation of and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a global problem, we in West Africa have cause to be more concerned about it because of the havoc that the use of these weapons has caused to lives and property in the subregion.

It is sad to observe that, of the 500 million light weapons believed to be in circulation worldwide, as many as 30 million are projected to be in use in Africa, with as many as 8 million in West Africa alone. From the Horn of Africa, via Sudan and straight through Central Africa to Angola, half a continent has suffered from conflicts that influence each other and are facilitated by the proliferation of small arms and the phenomenon of mercenaries. Parts of West Africa, with Liberia, Sierra Leone and, of late, Côte d'Ivoire as examples, are following the same pattern. Over the past decade alone, the use of small and light arms has claimed more than 20 million victims in Africa, many of whom have been civilians, women and children. An estimated 2 million children have been killed, 5 million people have been handicapped, 12 million have been left without shelter and as many as 17 million have been either displaced or rendered refugees. Africa also accounts for approximately 300,000 child soldiers and 10,000 mercenaries, with dire implications for the entire continent — especially for West Africa, with its rising number of conflict situations.

It was in recognition of the enormous scope of this problem that a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa was declared and signed by the heads of State and Government of ECOWAS in October 1998. The Moratorium was intended to serve as a coordinated and sustainable regional approach to controlling the illicit proliferation of small arms in West Africa. It was extended for another three years in October 2001 and is due for renewal again in November 2004.

An action plan adopted in March 1999 by ECOWAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs and a code of conduct adopted in December 1999 by ECOWAS heads of State and Government are both designed to encourage and promote the effective application of the Moratorium through transparent, concerted efforts at both the national and international levels. A Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development was similarly established as the framework for the implementation of measures associated with the Moratorium. ECOWAS member States are also signatories to several other international legal instruments designed to combat the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, as well as the phenomenon of mercenaries in the world.

Recent allegations of cross-border attacks by non-State actors, a spate of organized crime and other transborder criminality in the subregion underscore the timeliness of today's meeting. As we discuss the problems posed by the proliferation of small and light weapons, it is important that we be duly cognizant of the implications of the activities of individual weapons retailers and that we recommend sanctions where they violate the Moratorium and related international legal instruments. We should also examine ways of ensuring the increased participation of civil society groups and of non-governmental organizations in this effort. Furthermore, it may be worth considering whether there are any potential advantages to be derived from revising the Moratorium and making it a permanent instrument.

I cannot conclude my statement without drawing attention to the upsurge in the activities of mercenaries and private armies in conflict situations in West Africa. Like the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, mercenaries and private armies pose grave dangers to the stability of the subregion. The rate at which armed West African civilians are being recruited from one conflict area to another to fight for whoever is ready to engage their services has assumed alarming proportions in recent years.

No single country in the subregion can escape the consequences of the proliferation of weapons and of the increased resort to the use of mercenaries and private armies. Whether supportive or unsupportive of any of the conflicts in the region, each country in West Africa must come to terms with the problems of refugee flows, the militarization of borders and refugee camps, as well as cross-border crimes, including arms trafficking — all of which have dire implications for political stability and socio-economic development. It is only through our concerted efforts and the support of the international community that those problems can be overcome. I trust that this workshop will result in the formulation of appropriate recommendations to unite us in our common fight against the spread of small arms and light weapons and the phenomenon of mercenaries and private armies.

I thank members for their attention. It is my wish that the deliberations of this meeting will be very fruitful.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States.

Mr. Chambas (Economic Community of West African States): On behalf of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of this body of the United Nations at this critical time, when the Security Council is faced with the challenge of taking decisions that will ensure lasting peace and international security. I am confident that, with your wealth of experience, coupled with the famed traditional African wisdom, you will steer the proceedings of the Council in a fair and judicious manner.

I wish to thank the organizers of this consultative meeting, the Security Council and the Republic of Guinea for inviting me to share the concerns and the experiences of ECOWAS in the campaign against the

proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the growing activities of mercenaries and mercenary companies — which others call private military companies — that have deeply affected the political stability of Africa, in particular West Africa.

It is not surprising that a Guinean presidency of the Security Council has decided to include among its peace and security concerns the theme "Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and use of mercenaries: threats to peace and security in West Africa". As I understand, there are at least two reasons for this. First, Guinea is the West African country that has carried the greatest burden of the consequences of internal conflicts of its neighbours, and the issue of refugees is but one aspect of this phenomenon. Secondly, it is this same West African country that suffered a bloody mercenary attack as far back as 1970. Indeed, other West African States were later to suffer a similar fate. Consequently, our subregion became noted for its instability, characterized by the proliferation of small arms and by the phenomenon of mercenaries.

The primary objective of the Economic Community of West African States is to ensure economic integration and development in West Africa. However, the inextricable link between development and peace and stability has meant an increasingly greater role for ECOWAS in conflict management and prevention. In many parts of Africa, the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms — their number is estimated to be as high as 100 million — has posed a major threat to development, to political and economic stability, to civil liberties and to human lives. The growing number, intensity and duration of conflicts in Africa — most particularly in the Great Lakes region and in the Mano River Union basin — are a result of bad governance, economic failure and the easy availability of arms and mercenaries. It is estimated that there are 8 million small arms within West Africa, and scores of mercenary activities continue to take place.

Mercenary activities are deplored the world over and have been consistently condemned by our global Organization. At every opportunity, West African leaders have joined in the condemnation of the use in internal conflicts of foreign soldiers who are available only for hire in internal conflicts. In the 1990s, mercenary activities increased, all of them in contravention of the Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa, adopted by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), later the African Union (AU), and of resolutions of the United Nations that clearly condemn the hire and use of mercenaries in every form.

Strangely enough, in our subregion, a unique type of mercenary is emerging that is not the usual type. Over the past decade, the Mano River Union States have been besieged by rebel activities. The conflicts in Liberia, in Sierra Leone, in Guinea-Bissau to some extent and now, we see, in Côte d'Ivoire have been fought between Government and rebel factions. These rebel factions have been found to be involved in virtually all the conflicts in the Mano River Union States. They have taken on the semblance of mercenaries who have no loyalty to any particular authority and who are always available for hire; but then their motives are sometimes not easily discernible, since they can resort to random plundering and destruction of property, as we now see in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire.

Whatever may be the nature and type of mercenary activity that is confronted, there is a need for global action targeted at eliminating the practice and usefulness of mercenaries. ECOWAS heads of State and Government have committed themselves to ensuring that individual States take all necessary measures to disallow the use of their territories as a base for rebel or mercenary activities.

After the end of the cold war, the West African region, with a population of 250 million people, is indeed saturated with all types of small arms and light weapons. These weapons, which are easy to use due to advancements in technology and easy to move about because of our porous borders, need greater attention from the international community. Small arms, which are defined as weapons of mass destruction by some experts, are aggravating local, communal, national and regional conflicts. All over Africa, small arms proliferation has led to the death of millions of people. In the Sudan, over 2 million have been killed since 1982; in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, another 2 million have also reportedly been killed since 1996. In West Africa, nearly half a million people have died in the last decade from the misuse of small arms, or these "tools of death", as the International Action Network (IANSA) describes them.

As a result of numerous conflicts, death and destruction, West African leaders initiated a "security first" approach to ending conflicts. This led to the

adoption in 1998 of a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons. This is a bold and ambitious step in the management of licit and illicit small arms. The Moratorium is a confidence-building mechanism. Its imposition is a voluntary act backed by the joint political will of our heads of State and Government to deal with small arms proliferation.

The Moratorium requires member States to put in place effective measures to: first, control the import, export and manufacture of light weapons; secondly, register and control the movement and use of legitimate arms stocks; thirdly, detect and destroy all illicit and surplus weapons; and fourthly, permit exemptions to the Moratorium only in accordance with strict criteria.

The Moratorium has led to the establishment of focal points or national commissions in member States for the control of small arms, as recommended by the Code of Conduct, adopted by the heads of State in December 1999, for the implementation of this Moratorium. An important aspect of the Code is article 8, which concerns the establishment of a peacekeeping arms register in all peacekeeping operations within West Africa. Indeed, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its regional Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), is in the process of establishing with us this register next month in Côte d'Ivoire with the peacekeeping force that has been deployed there. The register is to keep a check on the nature and quantity of small arms used in the ECOWAS mission in Côte d'Ivoire.

The implementation of the ECOWAS Moratorium has been subjected to several evaluation exercises. The last major evaluation of its implementation — its general compliance with and effectiveness in member States — was carried out between September and December 2002.

I must not fail to mention that political will for the continuation of the Moratorium has never wavered, as member States of ECOWAS renewed it in October 2001 for another three years. There is yet again a strong indication that the Moratorium will eventually become a permanent strategy for the control of the movement of small arms within our subregion.

May I also use this opportunity to remind members of Security Council resolution 1209 (1998), which commended ECOWAS on the adoption of the Moratorium. The UNDP, as I have indicated, has supported ECOWAS, through PCASED, in backstopping the Moratorium since March 1999. We seize this opportunity to thank the United Nations and the Governments of the United Kingdom, France, Japan, Sweden, Canada, Norway, Switzerland and the Netherlands for the technical and financial support extended for the implementation of the Moratorium.

ECOWAS remains engaged with the international community over the twin devils of our time, small arms and mercenary activities. We call upon the international community to implement the letter and spirit of the United Nations Programme of Action and provide necessary resources to enable the ECOWAS secretariat to implement the ECOWAS Moratorium in all its ramifications.

Our community is committed towards ensuring widespread peace and security in the subregion. To this end, the ECOWAS heads of State, at their meeting in January this year, recognizing the gravity of the proliferation of small arms, its linkage to the continuing instability across our subregion and the activities of mercenaries and cross-border crimes, recommended the establishment of a small arms unit within the ECOWAS secretariat to strengthen our capacity to reduce, manage and eliminate small arms and to enhance human security as a means of facilitating the harmonious development of our countries.

I am appealing to the Security Council and the international community at large to support effective implementation of the Moratorium and to facilitate the establishment of a well-resourced small arms unit of the ECOWAS secretariat.

I look forward to fruitful and interactive discussions at this forum and once again wish you a successful tenure as President of the United Nations Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is Mr. Ibrahima Sall, the Regional Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED).

Mr. Sall (*spoke in French*): First of all, on behalf of Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, UNDP Director of the African Bureau, who is present here, I would like to congratulate Guinea on its presidency of the Council and to thank it for the very important initiative it is taking at this extremely important time, when the subject of weapons of mass destruction holds the attention of the international community.

We are going to give the Council a Power-Point presentation on the projection screen in this Chamber, and we will try to remain within the given time limits, bearing in mind the fact that later discussions will make it possible to go into further detail for those who wish so.

The point of our statement is to demonstrate UNDP's role in the fight against the proliferation of weapons in West Africa through PCASED. First, we would like to give Council members an idea of the range of proliferation of arms in West Africa, and then show how the Programme has been set up as a response to arms proliferation, before looking at measures on how to combat this proliferation in West Africa.

The situation of arms proliferation in West Africa today is extremely worrying, which has made this subregion one of the least stable in the world — first of all, because of the number and impact of coups d'état — 72 coups d'état took place between 1972 and 1980, of which 50 per cent were successful — with very typical examples. There is one country, for instance, where there were five attempted coups d'état in four years, with one of them alone creating approximately 250,000 refugees. Also, as we have stressed, there has been mercenary activity, a gearing down of trouble-spots that destabilize the subregion, 12 years of war in Liberia, 10 years in Sierra Leone, a revolt in Casamance which lasted for 20 years, and so forth.

Hence, the situation is explosive. There are more than 10 million arms in West Africa and, according to the most recent estimate, between 90 and 100 million persons are enduring this situation in the rest of Africa. Furthermore, 50 per cent of these weapons are used by organized criminal groups, and 80 per cent of the victims are the most impoverished — women, children and the elderly.

A very dark picture has emerged in the course of about 10 years: 2 million children have been killed; 5 million persons have been handicapped; 12 million children have been made homeless; 300,000 children have acted as combatants and over 10,000 mercenaries have emerged. All this points to the intensity, irreversibility and frequency of armed conflicts. Those conflicts have both direct and indirect effects on human security. It is in that context, therefore, that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) justified the rationality of the Programme in its 2002 mission statement.

I have not mentioned the specific situation in Nigeria, where, although there is no domestic rebellion there is nevertheless a great deal of insecurity. That insecurity could result in attacks on the civilian population, which will be the subject of the following images.

An image was projected on screen.

This is an image of the results of an attack with a Kalashnikov rifle, which is a weapon of war. That attack took place at a location where we had gone to establish a national commission to combat the proliferation of weapons. We came across this incident involving a vehicle being used to transfer funds that was attacked by Kalashnikov or AK-40 fire. It is pretty cheap to buy a Kalashnikov: one can find such a weapon on the market today for $30. The toll in this case was certainly terrible: a bullet in the abdomen, a lost eye and another bullet in the head. This level of insecurity is the daily fare in the region. It is therefore important to ask what the response of the Programme has been.

First of all, the response of the Programme set up by UNDP is based on the concept of human security. It involves extending the concept of human security not only to people and goods but also to economic and social rights. The link between development and security, as well as the security paradigm itself, are also part of that response.

Another element that I believe is important has to do with the fact that the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development is a typical example of a comprehensive response to a problem that has itself become global in nature. A range of actors is involved in this effort. International organizations, States, national organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGO), media and civil society groups are all participants in a system of partnership and coalition that is attempting to take ownership of the Programme through the national

commissions established by States and the national and transnational bodies of civil society. Having been given a formal platform, those bodies have been actively participating in the Moratorium since the latest summit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Multidimensional and multidisciplinary strategies are being put in place to deal with certain elements relating to legislative reform. They also exist because we are somewhat ahead of the game in West Africa with regard to the issue of combating the proliferation of arms. We have succeeded in establishing norms and in putting in place a programme of action. We are now attempting to link standards and behaviour though an incentive system. To that end, we are today relying on diplomacy and capacity-building. It should be remembered, however, that we do not yet have the power to impose sanctions or carry out public negotiations.

An image was projected on screen.

This next image is of a young man from Sierra Leone who stepped on a mine. We used this image in our campaign during the Africa Cup to illustrate how people's dreams are also shattered.

Our response has therefore been comprehensive. But above all it has been an interesting response in that for the first time in the fight against the proliferation of arms, we have both a political delegation comprised of ECOWAS States and the political legitimacy necessary for the Programme to be able to be involved on a country by country basis and to make direct contact with ministers for foreign affairs, defence and security to discuss the issues at hand. This state of affairs indeed makes for the effectiveness and level of specificity that are among the strengths of the Programme.

Lastly, with regard to comprehensiveness, the most important thing about the Programme established by UNDP in Africa is that it involves a programme for practical disarmament that goes beyond lofty principles. Through the UNDP Programme we have today been able to respond to the issue of how to resolve the problem of proliferation on the ground. Our mission is to promote the culture of peace, train security forces, establish border controls, create a regional register of light weapons, harmonize laws, collect and destroy weapons, extend the spirit of moratorium to the rest of the African continent, mobilize resources and begin a dialogue with arms manufacturers.

The most important thing today is to establish what we refer to as national commissions to combat the proliferation of weapons. This is a matter of establishing such commissions in all ECOWAS States. Created by States themselves, which would also determine their composition, such commissions would serve as the implementing agents in combating the proliferation of weapons. They would also be responsible for ensuring the durability of the effort and for strengthening the capacity of States in the area of combating proliferation.

Up until 2001 there were only five national commissions. Thanks to intense work done by a team in the field, 13 out of a potential 15 national commissions have been established in a single year. Thirteen out of the 15 countries in the West Africa region therefore have national commissions to combat proliferation. Due to the current instability in the country, Côte d'Ivoire is one of the States without a commission. We hope that, with the support of the Executive Secretary, we will be able to benefit from the establishment of the new Government to set up a national commission, set up a register in any future peacekeeping operation and move towards destroying surplus arms. Liberia is the other exception. That situation is due to the civil war in the country. However, it has demonstrated a firm commitment to establish a national commission. Moreover — and this is the second point I wish to make in this regard — once established, national commissions become part of a network that exists for the purposes of sharing best practices, cooperating to combat the proliferation of weapons and exchanging information.

Decentralization has now been instituted. For example, Mali's commission is so far ahead that it has already created local commissions to combat proliferation in the north, east and west of the country.

The Programme must now complete that network by incorporating Nigeria. What is most important, however, is that we move from the state of institutional integration that has always existed between the Programme and UNDP resident representatives to an operational integration that includes in national commissions those responsible for good-governance programmes. From an operational standpoint, that

would serve to integrate the United Nations system into anti-proliferation efforts.

Strengthening border controls is also part of our Programme. Just a few days ago, we provided Mali with over $200,000 to secure its borders with Mauritania and Algeria. We are now in the process of helping Benin, and are considering extending assistance to Ghana and Niger.

We are also involved in training security forces. We have trained trainers, namely, over 300 senior officers throughout the 15 participating countries. With the national decentralization now in place, and using our own training manual, over 7,500 agents will be trained in advance of the unit-level decentralization of security and armed forces.

With regard to actual figures, we have destroyed 38,000 weapons in West Africa. The Council will note that, as we have already stated, we have, paradoxically, destroyed the most weapons in Liberia. In addition, as they exit the Chamber, members will find a film on the destruction of weapons in Liberia, which has been an extremely significant event.

In tandem with that, we are paying particular attention to the subject of light weapons that includes anti-personnel mines, as they too fall within this category. We have a zero-mines initiative in place in West Africa. With Canada's help, we intend to destroy all Government landmine stocks. We will also follow that with demining programmes, to begin a year after the destruction of those weapons.

Three projects are currently under way. The first entails promoting the culture of peace. In that regard, it is important to point out that we intend to reform primary, secondary and university curricula in West Africa in order to include the teaching of the culture of peace. Another project involves harmonizing security-related legislation into a single law through an international convention, as we have done in the area of business law. The third, and last, programme involves establishing a regional register of light weapons. As the Council is aware, a regional register of conventional arms was established following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/36 L. However, after three years of work by a group of experts, it has not been possible to include light weapons in the Register of Conventional Arms. Light weapons will therefore be included in regional registers. ECOWAS will be working on this issue through the establishment of pilot projects on a country-by-country basis. Several countries have already volunteered to provide comprehensive information on their stocks of small arms and ammunition, which will make it possible for us to go to the source in order to coordinate our efforts to come up with genuinely national registers.

I now wish to refer to the future of the Programme. First, we will seek to integrate the Programme into the framework of international efforts, beginning with the United Nations Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Their Aspects. We will then seek to associate ourselves with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). If memory serves me, I believe that France has been entrusted with the peace and security portfolio, and that it is in the process of working on that matter. That is how we plan to involve ourselves in new international efforts.

We also hope to expand and improve our partnership with implementing bodies, the agencies of the United Nations and donors in particular. In that regard, I believe that it is very important that we have put in place a mechanism at the level of regional programmes that makes it possible for all the Ambassadors of donor countries to meet their counterparts from recipient countries in order to be able to discuss all aspects of the Programme in total transparency.

Another important point is integrating the UNDP resident representatives and, further, those responsible for the good governance within the framework of the struggle against the proliferation of arms.

But the most important aspect of efforts to combat proliferation, as the Executive Secretary said, is not only political commitment and will, but also the mobilization of resources. It must be understood that our Programme started with a 60 per cent deficit in resources. Of the estimated $13 million needed to carry out the Plan of Action, we were able to mobilize only $5 million.

I would like to give a very simple example. Today, the minimal programme — and I stress minimal — to strengthen borders of the 15 West African countries, which would mean four sites per country, would call for $6 million. But since PCASED was established in 1998, we have not been able to

mobilize this sum. So this gives you some idea of our shortfalls and deficit problems.

The last operational perspective is the matter of reducing demand through the Moratorium and through stricter monitoring and assessment regimes. I believe the Interim Commissioner for Peace, Security and Political Affairs has clearly stressed that. We need a far more restrictive regime for countries that have adopted the Moratorium. At the same time, on the supply side, the proposal that the export of weapons to conflict-torn regions be avoided is important, but that implies that declarations be made.

Today, the customs statistics collected by the United Nations are not sufficient, partly because military arms are not declared, arms are in transit, and free-trade areas are proliferating, and all this means that important data are not available to us. Therefore, we have to rely on voluntary reporting by States. It should be noted that even now, among the more than 100 exporting countries, only 29 submit reports, and they do not always provide data that are relevant to our efforts to combat the proliferation of weapons.

Therefore, we will also step up the campaigns for demobilization and micro-disarmament operations, and especially for public awareness, as we have been able to do in Chad concerning human development, saying it is a race to be won. Another image that we would like to put forward is that of tolerance and of all of us coming together in national unity. Lastly, there is the image of the flame of peace. Let us act before it dies out.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Regional Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) in Africa for his kind words addressed to my country.

Following this important and interesting statement by the Director of PCASED, I would like to remind the Council that our meeting today is a workshop and, as such, it is interactive. The groups of speakers, if they wish, will be able to ask questions. Since we have the opportunity of having with us this morning the leadership of the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and PCASED, they would certainly be glad to answer any questions that might be raised.

The next speaker is Mr. Baboucarr-Blaise Ismaila Jagne, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Jagne (Gambia): Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. My delegation is indeed proud that it has fallen on none other than the Republic of Guinea, a sisterly neighbour of ours in the West African subregion, to preside over the affairs of the Security Council at this time — a time that might well prove to be the defining moment in the future of the United Nations. I have no doubt that, as always, you will discharge your responsibility with objectivity, fairness and sagacity.

Let me also pay homage to your predecessor, Minister Joschka Fischer of Germany, and his able colleague, Ambassador Gunter Pleuger, for a job well done during the month of February.

My delegation is indeed grateful to you for organizing this ministerial workshop on the proliferation of small arms, light weapons and the phenomenon of mercenaries: threats to peace and security in West Africa. This is a subject that is of great concern to us all in West Africa, not least to President Al Hadji Yahya A. J. J. Jammeh and the Government of the Gambia. We have been drawing attention to this West African problem for several years now, because the accumulation of small arms and light weapons is obviously an important contributing factor to the unending conflicts that have plagued much of West Africa and stymied development on the continent. The fact is that, for the most part, the methods through which these weapons are acquired are illicit, as are the purposes for which they are acquired. Currently, it is reported that there are an estimated 8 million illicit small arms in circulation within and across our porous borders in West Africa.

Within the last decade, the problem of small arms and light weapons has led to the convening of a number of summit meetings on the issue, culminating in 1998 in the adoption of a declaration of a three-year renewable Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on small arms, the first of its kind in Africa. In addition to the moratorium, ECOWAS heads of State also adopted a plan of action and a code of conduct and made a decision that each country would establish a national commission to

oversee implementation. Together, all these instruments would facilitate enforcement of the Moratorium.

In addition to that, as a support and monitoring mechanism, the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), in close cooperation with the ECOWAS secretariat and the various national commissions, provides assistance with national initiatives to align existing laws and administrative procedures with the requirements of the Moratorium. It maintains a register of weapons being used by peacekeeping troops in the subregion; processes requests for exemptions and importation by Governments of arms, ammunitions and components; provides training in arms control; and promotes cooperation with manufacturers and suppliers on the implementation of the Moratorium.

Thus it can be seen that commendable efforts are being made by West African Governments to address the problem. Besides, the far-reaching decision taken by our leaders to extend the Moratorium for a second three-year period is indeed a clear demonstration of political will to deal seriously with this problem.

Of equal concern is the character of the end users of these arms and weapons. It is a well-known fact that it is militias that drive conflicts in Africa. Some time back, it came to light that these militias depended to a significant extent on child soldiers. That realization shocked the world into action, and the international community responded with the appropriate measures to confront this issue. But over and above this repugnant reality, what has also been emerging in bold relief has been the fact that the backbone of these militias is made up largely of mercenaries. This phenomenon has not yet received the attention it truly deserves.

In the past, mercenary activities in Africa were associated with European adventurers and "dogs of war". Increasingly, however, Africa is becoming quite adept in producing its own rich crop of these soldiers of fortune. The West African subregion in particular is riddled with war and conflict situations that are driven by mercenary-dominated militias.

The conflicts of the Mano River Union, for example, were sustained through the use of mercenaries by the various warlords. It is now well known that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone was made up of combatants from virtually every country in West Africa, who were engaged on contract terms to fight for pay and profit for the sole purpose of overthrowing the legitimate Government of Sierra Leone. It is also a fact that these elements were involved in the invasion of Guinea and in the present imbroglio in Liberia, not to mention the atrocities that they perpetrated during those difficult times. There are more than strong indications that in the latest conflict situation in West Africa, in Côte d'Ivoire, the spillover of mercenaries from the Mano River Union conflicts is an important additional complicating element.

Mercenaries are totally lacking in conscience and morality. Their only loyalty and allegiance is to themselves, and they will respond only to the highest bidder. There are known cases of mercenaries who have fought with several different militias, some of whom were mortal enemies. They are there, ready to fight anyone's war, so long as the price is right.

It is certain that for as long as these unsavoury elements exist in our midst, the demand for small arms and light weapons will be there — as will the financiers and lords of war. They constitute a critical link in the chain of conflict. And unless that link is broken, we in West Africa will know no peace or rest.

It will be recalled that in July 2001, the United Nations convened the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, at which it decided to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Conference affirmed that "Governments bear the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" and that "the international community has a duty to deal with this issue" (*A/CONF.192/15, preambular paragraphs 13 and 15*). I believe that the same holds true for the problem of mercenaries.

It is true that in the West African subregion Governments have started to assume their responsibilities vis-à-vis the control of small arms and light weapons. What they have achieved, commendable as it may be, is only a beginning. Much more needs to be done.

In December 2002, at the end of the third year of the Moratorium, an evaluation was undertaken. Some of its findings and observations are instructive. Let me highlight a few.

> "Unless the world's major arms producers take more responsibility for managing the world market in arms, the most vulnerable States will continue to suffer from the uncontrolled trade in small arms ... A renewed momentum needs to be built around the issue of dialogue with arms suppliers and producers.
>
> "While the (numerous) applications for waivers (for imports of arms and ammunitions) indicate that member States do respect the Moratorium, there have been allegations that not all States are complying with the Code of Conduct ... ECOWAS member States may therefore wish to review the Code of Conduct in order to provide (a) enforcement measures ... when countries are found to be in violation of their obligations, and (b) initiation of investigation of serious breaches of the Code of Conduct."
>
> Regarding import exemptions,
>
> "there is a gray area in the exemption procedure: there is currently no clause requiring that arms dealers" (as opposed to State parties) "submit an application to the ECOWAS Secretariat ... There is yet another gray area in the exemption process: countries which have been granted waivers do not have to show them when purchasing weapons."

Against this backdrop, I should like us to consider a few proposals as to what more could be done, over and above the efforts made so far, to address the problem of small arms, light weapons and mercenaries in West Africa. It goes without saying that a priori, each West African country must show stronger commitment towards the objectives of the sub-regional and international initiatives on this issue and a greater willingness to enforce the agreements made collectively.

First, an international legislative instrument is needed to hold both supplier and user of small arms and light weapons to greater account. Manufacturers and suppliers must be made to show more responsible behaviour in the transfer of these arms and weapons to non-State actors. A mechanism must be put in place to ensure that transfers are made only to legitimate State end-users. The efforts under way to regulate arms supplies to militias in certain countries in the region should be modified for application throughout West Africa. In addition to that, something akin to the monitoring and regulation of the movement of blood diamonds should be designed to control the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Of course, these would have to be backed up by an appropriate sanctions regime. In this regard, much stronger cooperation must be sought from the arms manufacturers and suppliers, signatories of the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Control for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.

Secondly, actions should be taken to check the activities of illicit arms brokers, dealers and retailers in much the same way as measures have been taken against illicit drug dealers. The situation in West Africa today is such that it is easy for individuals or groups of individuals to purchase any amount of arms and weapons, sometimes fairly openly. Effective measures must be put in place to stop this.

Thirdly, we need to promulgate an international convention proscribing the activities and use of mercenaries in the subregion. Warlords who recruit mercenaries to carry out any kind of war, whether justifiable or not, should be held to account. The appropriate surveillance and enforcement mechanisms should then be put in place.

Fourthly, as an immediate measure to respond to the urgency of the situation in West Africa, steps should be taken to demobilize mercenaries and have them reinserted into productive and gainful economic activities in their countries of origin. Sierra Leone recently had a successful programme, supported by the United Nations, for the demobilization, reintegration and reinsertion of tens of thousands of its nationals. A subregional version of such a programme is what is being proposed now.

Fifthly, some legislative instrument is needed to prevent the provision of safe havens, rear bases, logistics, supplies, etc., to mercenaries and other users of illicit small arms and light weapons. The appropriate regime of sanctions on defaulters would also need to be worked out.

Finally, to have any or all of the foregoing enforced, we would need a much stronger partnership between the United Nations, PCASED and ECOWAS. At present, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Secretariat's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of

Peacekeeping Operations and Department for Disarmament Affairs, and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research provide various forms of assistance and support to the work of PCASED. What is now required is for that cooperation to be broadened to include concerted actions on the question of mercenaries, as well as a more formal arrangement through which the Security Council, in close cooperation with ECOWAS and PCASED, would establish a mechanism for monitoring the situation, receiving reports on it and enforcing its decisions on matters of small arms, light weapons and mercenaries. Perhaps the United Nations Office for Conflict Prevention and Peace-building for West Africa should assume the role of coordinator of this arrangement, and liaison between the Security Council and ECOWAS.

My delegation fervently hopes that this workshop will not be a one-day wonder. It is our expectation that from our deliberations will emerge the pointers that will lead to stronger collaboration between all the major players in West Africa on one hand, and the Security Council on the other, in a bid to confront our subregion's biggest challenge, namely, the problem of mercenaries and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I thank the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Gambia for his kind words and encouragement addressed to Guinea.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola, His Excellency Mr. João Bernardo de Miranda.

Mr. Miranda (Angola) *(spoke in French)*: I would first like to congratulate Guinea for the initiative it has taken to convene this special meeting that allows us to analyse and seek effective solutions to problems which have gravely affected the stability of certain regions of the African continent and that have thus contributed to the economic backwardness of those regions.

I would also like to welcome the presence of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and those holding other portfolios from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS and the High Representative of Amara Essy, who is Interim President of the Commission of the African Union.

The problem of the proliferation of light arms, mercenary activities and threats to peace and security in West Africa have become a real danger, and they concern us. They are also directly related to the prolongation of conflicts and of the climate of tension that reigns in some countries in this region. The number of deaths and wounded is growing daily because of the use of small arms. The causes of this problem are many, and they vary from one region to another. The inappropriate use of light arms in some countries creates difficulties that harm the well-being and safety of citizens and, in other countries, even threaten the existence of the State.

In countries that have concluded peace agreements, this factor creates impediments and undermines the prevailing trust among the protagonists of the peace process, while it blocks peacekeeping operations, efforts at reconstruction and development in countries in the post-conflict phase, and the normal development of national democratic processes.

Given the current serious threat to peace and security, and given the risk that it will spread to other regions in Africa, the problem that is striking West Africa is of such a scope that the solution cannot rest solely with the countries or group of countries directly affected. A more substantial commitment on the part of the United Nations, and of the Security Council in particular, is vital — thus the merit and importance of today's meeting.

The growing concentration of light weapons in different regions around the globe and the possession and use of these weapons by civilian groups or subversive armed organizations can be traced mainly to the ineffectiveness of systems for controlling arms imports and exports, faulty oversight of military arsenals, and the illicit trafficking in arms, sometimes carried out with the connivance of Governments producing weapons.

As well, some countries selling arms have not demonstrated sufficient restraint in exporting to regions already destroyed by conflict. They have incited belligerent groups to pursue subversive and destabilizing wars.

The arms embargoes imposed by the Council in order to control the proliferation of weapons have not been fully respected. They have led to a transformation of numerous regions, mostly African, into veritable arms bazaars and sources of new conflicts.

The limited success of embargoes on arms for Africa is due to the poor results achieved by a number of States in controlling their borders, linked to a lack of political will and to interference in the internal affairs of other States. The experience of the Angolan conflict has demonstrated that the importation of weapons that were subsequently delivered to armed groups was a fact in certain African countries that were using lawful procedures. That situation continues to be true in the case of other States engaged in conflicts.

We must therefore urgently speed up the fine-tuning of an international mechanism enabling States to identify and to trace the flows of small arms and light weapons, including those arms of legal provenance. We must create a mechanism that easily identifies any individual or enterprise involved in the illicit traffic of arms so that they can be severely punished.

Arms trafficking in Western Africa is not inevitable. It can be eliminated. One appropriate way is the implementation by all States of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in July 2001. Southern Africa, to which my country belongs, has already taken steps in that direction by adopting the protocol of the Southern Africa Development Community on firearms and munitions.

We should take note of the public denunciation of States and individuals that have been shown to be deliberately involved in the violation of arms embargoes, as well as of the sanctions imposed on them. That procedure has proven to be very effective in significantly reducing violations of the embargoes imposed by the United Nations during the period of conflict in my country.

The United Nations must therefore play an essential role on the question of the proliferation of arms. To that end, it must provide assistance to help Western Africa carry out programmes for disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration. The United Nations must also promote all measures to seize and destroy weapons arsenals in the framework of peace accords. That very important measure will prevent those who intend to persist in the choice of war from gaining access to arms. My country's experience in that area has been very positive.

Angolan legislation stipulates that the use and carriage of firearms are strictly prohibited. We are fine-tuning a compensation process based on the principle of voluntary action, which comprises three phases. The first phase is essentially administrative in nature and consists of establishing structures for the registering and reception of surrendered arms. The primary objective of the second phase is to raise the awareness of the public. It is aimed at the overall society and should take into account the results of investigations and of actions for the collection of large quantities of small firearms. We envisage compensation for informers. The third phase will begin immediately after the end of the time period established for the voluntary return of small firearms. Only at the end of the three phases will we introduce new legislation to modify the provisions on prohibition under the law on the use and possession of firearms by civilians.

We also consider fundamental United Nations support for the Moratorium declared in 1998 by the Economic Community of West African States on the importation and exportation and manufacture of small arms in all their aspects, which enables the States of the region to contribute to the creation of a culture of peace, which should lead to the gradual elimination of their conflicts.

Also, it must be underlined that some countries in the region — countries that are already well known — must halt their military, political and diplomatic and material assistance to armed groups active in other States. The Governments of countries in conflict must, in turn, demonstrate political will by taking concrete measures towards greater flexibility as a prior condition necessary for a climate favourable to the peaceful negotiation of conflicts.

We believe that the important conclusions established as the outcome of this meeting will signal the commitment of the States members of the Security Council and of the Economic Community of West African States to cooperate effectively in order to lessen as much as possible the climate of tension prevailing in Western Africa and to eradicate in the short term the currently prevailing instability.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola for his kind words addressed to my country.

I now give the floor to His Excellency François-Xavier Ngoubeyou, Minister of State for External Relations of Cameroon.

Mr. Ngoubeyou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): It is a genuine pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over our work today. My country is proud of the spirit with which your country, Guinea, is guiding the Council's work in the particularly sensitive international environment of March 2003 that is known to us all. Also allow me to congratulate the Council through you, Sir, for taking this initiative.

Holding a public debate on the question of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa should be placed within a larger context that began in the decade of the 1990s. In its debate on disarmament and micro-disarmament, the international community has given top priority to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and related phenomenon.

This awareness of the danger represented by portable arms led to the holding here in New York in July 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Lights Weapons in All Its Aspects. During that Conference, we all noted that the manufacture, transfer and illicit circulation of those weapons, as well as their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled proliferation, in numerous regions of the world, particularly in West Africa, constituted a grave threat to peace, security, stability, reconciliation and sustainable development at the individual, local, national, regional and international levels.

At the end of that meeting, we jointly adopted a plan of action to establish concrete measures at the national, regional and international levels to prevent, control and eliminate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

I felt compelled to make this digression to emphasize that this debate should not be considered a spontaneous occurrence, an act without precedence, but rather a significant moment, one stage of a dynamic, future-oriented and standard-setting process that has long been under way. We believe that this meeting is yet another opportunity for us to place particular emphasis on this issue and to reaffirm the role of the United Nations in collecting, classifying, sharing and disseminating information on illicit traffic in light weapons. In that context, the Council should take the necessary measures to provide assistance to States and subregional organizations, particularly African ones, to ensure that all African countries will rise to the same level of political awareness as nations of other regions in the area of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Furthermore, by insisting on the elaboration of an international instrument against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, in accordance with the above-mentioned plan of action, I would like once again to highlight that that is a strong recommendation, the immediate and effective implementation of which will undoubtedly constitute a decisive phase in our struggle against this scourge.

Last October, under the presidency of Cameroon, the Council had organized a day of discussion devoted to the issue of small arms. On that occasion, several delegations recognized that the Security Council should play a greater role to ensure better control of the circulation of light weapons by establishing a permanent monitoring mechanism to follow up on embargoes and other sanctions regarding those weapons. Organizing the collection of light weapons and setting up small economic projects for groups and communities concerned could also be very useful if the international community were to support them.

There is also a need to strengthen legislation at the national level with regard to firearms and the prohibition and use of firearms by security companies that are now proliferating in our countries. Robust measures need to be taken against the home manufacture of firearms. What worries us today is the linkage between trade and other prohibited phenomena such as terrorism, organized crime, drug traffic, large-scale banditry in our cities and road blocks that are set up in some regions. More comprehensively, I wish to emphasize the need at the national, and possibly the subregional level, to adopt measures aimed at preventing conflict, because we know that disputes leading to civil wars or to similar situations are important factors in the proliferation and illicit circulation of light weapons.

Despite the entry into force in 2001 of the United Nations convention on this matter, the use of mercenaries is one of the major concerns of most African States and of other areas of the globe. At the behest of local powers, mercenaries continue to fuel conflict in Africa, contributing to the pillage of natural resources and the destabilization of power in the area. There are flagrant human rights violations, particularly of the right of peoples to self-determination. In that regard, we believe that our priorities for action should

emphasize a redefinition of mercenary activity, a study on how mercenaries are used in terrorist attacks and how to strengthen the roles of the United Nations and the Security Council in the fight against the phenomenon of mercenarism.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister of State for External Relations of Cameroon for his kind words addressed to my country and to myself.

This was the last speaker in the first round. We have not noted any questions. Therefore, we will go straight to the next round. The first speaker on my list is Mr. Monie Captan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Captan (Liberia): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March. Liberia expresses its appreciation for your foresight in confronting this body with the critical issues of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the phenomenon of mercenaries — threats to peace and security in West Africa.

The problem of the proliferation of small arms in West Africa has claimed the attention of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for some time now, and as a result of the seriousness attached to this problem, the Community adopted a protocol establishing a Moratorium on the importation of small arms into West Africa. This initiative was spearheaded by Mali and was supported by many international partners, in particular the United Nations. The success of this initiative relies heavily on the cooperation of arms-producing States, as arms continue to enter the subregion and conflicts continue to persist.

The problem of mercenaries has also claimed the attention of ECOWAS. A proposal by Liberia at the meeting of Foreign Ministers of ECOWAS in December 2002 in Dakar was adopted. Under its provisions, ECOWAS would convene a special meeting on the subject to explore ways and means to address this problem. The proliferation of mercenaries in West Africa was in part induced as a result of the unsuccessful reintegration programmes for ex-combatants that failed because the international community did not provide adequate resources for these programmes. This resulted in a large population of idle ex-combatants in an economically stagnant region where ex-combatants' only means of earning a living was to sell their skills as armed fighters for money and loot.

The proliferation of arms and mercenaries are linked in that mercenaries can only operate where there are continuous military supplies. In many instances, mercenaries join rebel movements and are ensured military supplies by State actors who use non-State actors as proxies in regional conflicts. The proliferation of mercenaries is of particular concern because mercenaries in West Africa are more often ex-combatants from regional conflicts who are recycled into conflicts and sustain conflict and instability in the region. Mercenaries survive in environments where non-State actors are actively engaged in armed conflicts. We have witnessed this situation in Liberia, Sierra Leone and now Côte d'Ivoire. A case in point is the ongoing war in Liberia, where the rebels of the Liberians United Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), fighting to overthrow the democratically elected Government of Liberia, comprise ex-combatants from the defunct warring factions in Liberia, the Sierra Leonean Kamajors and Guinean nationals. This rebel group of mixed nationals is now engaged in fighting on all sides of the Ivorian conflict.

In addressing the proliferation of arms and mercenaries, the international community must focus on the source of the arms supply to these non-State actors. Failure to do so will lead to the maintenance of a large number of mercenaries in West Africa who could surface in any part of West Africa and beyond, causing further instability and creating a major humanitarian crisis, resulting in an increase in already-alarming levels of refugees and internally displaced persons within the subregion.

The recent arrest and disarming by French forces in Côte d'Ivoire of more than 100 Liberian mercenaries fighting for the Ivorian Government is an indication of the seriousness of this problem. Those Liberians are a part of the rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), which went to fight for the Ivorian Government in order to gain access to and open a second front in eastern Liberia, along the Liberian-Ivorian border. A second front was established with an incursion into Toe Town, Grand Gedeh County, from Côte d'Ivoire by Liberian mercenaries. Such a development has the potential to create a new security crisis between the two neighbouring States.

In another recent development, the Government of Ghana raided a Liberian refugee camp in Ghana, where a recruitment centre and a military training camp were discovered. Ex-combatants seek refuge and safety in refugee camps, where they actively carry out recruitment.

For the past three years, the Liberian Government has been engaged in a war to defend its territorial integrity against armed aggression by LURD and its mercenaries from neighbouring countries. ECOWAS, in its attempt to curtail such illegal activities, imposed a sanctions regime on LURD. However, this pressure on the part of ECOWAS has not received much support from the international community, which has done little to show its disapproval for this armed insurgency.

The Security Council mandated a panel of experts to investigate the flow of arms supplies to rebel groups — LURD — in Liberia, in violation of the arms embargo. The panel reported to the Council that the rebels had direct links to the President of neighbouring Guinea and that materiel was reaching the rebels from the territory of Guinea. The panel then recommended that the Council expand its arms embargo on Liberia to the other two members of the Mano River Union. That crucial recommendation was selectively ignored by the Council.

Today, LURD rebels continue to wage war against the Liberian people with a robust and sustained supply of materiel. Last month, the Government of Liberia presented a formal complaint to the Security Council — in keeping with Article 35, paragraph 1 of the Charter of the United Nations — in which Guinea's involvement in fuelling the war in Liberia was documented. These Guinean-backed rebels have now surfaced in Côte d'Ivoire and have recently taken control of Liberian territory adjacent to Sierra Leone along the western border of Liberia.

Sustainable peace in West Africa will require an end to such support for rebel movements and their mercenaries. Sustainable peace will also require the provision of adequate resources for the reconstruction of economic infrastructure in West Africa and for the reintegration of ex-combatants, the resettlement of internally displaced persons, the repatriation of refugees, job creation and the promotion of an enabling environment for good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and democracy.

When the objective of regime change is promoted through the expediency of violence and the use of force, acceptance of the consequences of the proliferation of small arms and the use of mercenaries becomes an integral aspect of international attitudes. Such attitudes then become the source of immeasurable human suffering and of a degradation of the humanity of hundreds of thousands of West Africans, with an accompanying charade of humanitarian responses. A change in international attitudes will go a long way towards bringing an end to human suffering, especially with regard to political expediency and moral justification for the use of violence.

Today, those subjects are at the core of the fact of underdevelopment in our region — especially in the Mano River subregion, where poverty is so entrenched and has a dehumanizing effect on its peoples. The tragedy is even more profound in view of the fact that the subregion and the region as a whole are rich in resources. Poverty, hunger and disease are endemic to our people, while our resources assuage the greed of countries and of people who already have much.

Through the expropriation of our resources, we are supplied with swords and instruments created for our self-immolation. The region has become a Petri dish for those who manufacture small arms and light weapons in an experiment on how to degrade nations and people. The best and most conducive conditions for the creation of mercenaries are an absence of good schools, continuous cultural disruptions, economic deprivation and a lack of economic empowerment. Young men between the ages of 12 and 19 who are deprived of the basic sustenance of family life and of the hope of surviving beyond the age of 28 are apt to embrace mercenarism as a way of life, and many countries are prepared to provide them with the implements of their trade.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Guinean presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate on two key issues in the complex scenario of threats to international peace and security in West Africa, and we congratulate the presidency on this initiative, which is very timely.

We welcome the broad participation that this debate has attracted, with regard to both the States present and the regional and subregional organizations represented by the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We

believe that the issue's regional dimension is essential and that only through joining measures at the national level with regional initiatives will we be able to consistently and comprehensively confront the threat to peace and security that the millions of small arms and light weapons circulating in West Africa represent.

My delegation would like to appeal to all West African countries and to their regional organizations to implement the measures contained in the action plan that resulted from the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in New York in July 2002. For the sake of brevity, and given the impossibility of dealing with every facet of this debate, I should like to make several comments and to pose several questions on the following points.

First of all, I should like to stress the importance of including concrete measures concerning the elimination of small arms and light weapons in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants. That component is sometimes not included in peace agreements and, when it is, its implementation in practice is slow and problematic. In our judgement, the delays in this type of programme have very negative consequences in the post-conflict phase. I should like to know the opinions of the West African States present in this Chamber that are implementing this type of programme with regard to what lessons they have learned in that respect.

Secondly, I should like to express my concern about the urgent issue of child soldiers in West Africa. We attach great importance to the reintegration of child soldiers — especially to the educational aspect of their reintegration. I should like to ask the States that are present what their activities are in that respect.

My last point concerns the ECOWAS Moratorium. In its implementation, African States must not forget the importance of the ways in which these arms are supplied and the great responsibility of the States bordering the countries where conflicts are currently taking place. I should like to ask the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS what technical difficulties are being encountered in the implementation of the Moratorium. What is his assessment of the role of the national commissions established thus far?

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Spain for his statement and questions.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I warmly welcome you back, Mr. Minister, to the presidency chair, together with your fellow Ministers from Africa in this room. I am delighted that we also have among us senior representatives of the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), whose briefings to us this morning were important.

Mr. President, congratulations on the establishment of this workshop, which we enthusiastically support. Small arms and light weapons are the predominant instruments of conflict in a great majority of recent conflicts, and it is estimated that at least half a million people die every year as a result of their use. This is something rightly of concern to the Security Council.

Illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons threatens international peace and security. It is closely connected with other forms of international organized crime and with terrorism. It poses a complex challenge, involving security, humanitarian and development dimensions. This is, sadly, too well-illustrated in West Africa, where small arms in the hands of rebels have exacerbated and prolonged conflicts.

Action needs to be taken by various players in different forums: first, we warmly encourage ECOWAS to work on practical steps to implement the well-constructed Moratorium it adopted in 1998. Mr. Chambas has described how this is being done. The Presidential Statement we are to adopt this morning includes several suggestions, including establishing an ECOWAS register of small arms and light weapons, strengthening national commissions, and introducing standardized end-user certificates for imported weapons. We encourage donors to provide additional assistance to ECOWAS to meet these challenges. And I would like to know whether the Executive Secretary can tell us more precisely what is needed in terms of items and cost, so that donors can respond to the requirements of his organization.

Secondly, we also encourage arms producing and exporting countries to exercise the highest degree of responsibility in small arms and light weapons transactions. The Governments of those States that transfer small arms and light weapons bear a

significant responsibility for controlling trade in such weapons. Strengthening export controls has to be an important step in the right direction. This includes careful scrutiny, not only of end-user certificates, but also of the wider environment in which the weapons are to be deployed.

The United Kingdom held a conference in London in January during which participants recognized the central role for the United Nations in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. This conference discussed how to strengthen efforts to implement relevant commitments in the United Nations Programme of Action. These include the need for States to have adequate laws and procedures to exercise effective control over these weapons transfers, as well as to assess applications for export authorizations according to strict national regulations and procedures. We look forward to working with partners to follow up the conclusions of this conference.

In this context, we welcome the establishment of the United Nations group of governmental experts that examines the feasibility of developing an international instrument, enabling States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons. We believe that the Council itself must take a close interest in how all these initiatives are followed up and implemented.

Thirdly, it is crucial that United Nations sanctions are more effectively implemented. This was the motivation behind the proposal by the United Kingdom and France last year for an independent monitoring mechanism on sanctions. Mechanisms need to be developed to strengthen the capacity to enforce United Nations arms embargoes at the national, regional and international levels. We would like to work further with Council partners on this.

Others have made interesting proposals this morning. The Foreign Minister of Gambia, for instance, has pointed to the need for an international legal instrument to hold those who foster the small arms trade to greater account and for an international convention on mercenaries. We would be happy to consider these and other ideas, as well as ways of promoting greater coordination between all the different mechanisms and concepts in these areas.

In conclusion, we believe that trade in small arms and light weapons poses real and urgent problems. The human dimension of these problems, including their impact on women and families, should be a powerful incentive for Governments throughout the world, not just in West Africa, to coordinate their efforts in combating the proliferation of these deadly weapons.

The Council must therefore, from today onwards, act to ensure that ideas for curtailing the trade are put into effect and make a difference where it matters, in West Africa and elsewhere. The Presidential Statement we are considering is a good start and has our support.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his comments.

Before continuing, I would like to call on the Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) and the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Some questions and observations were raised. Perhaps they would be kind enough to answer them: specific measures on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, concerns expressed by the representative of Spain regarding child soldiers and activities for reintegration of these child soldiers, as well as the difficulties encountered to implement the Moratorium, and other comments and observations.

I call on the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Mr. Chambas: I will talk about the national commissions, and Mr. Sall will address the issues regarding the technical difficulties, the implementation and some of the requirements for more effective implementation.

A major part of the problem, of course, is the lack of information on or ignorance about this particular problem that plagues our subregion. The role of national commissions is, among other things, of course, to bring greater awareness to the various countries and their populations and to sensitize our peoples to the dangers of small arms and mercenaries. As we have been informed, 13 of our member States now indeed have national commissions, and the role of these commissions will be to begin work effectively to, first of all, ensure that member States incorporate the Moratorium in their laws. By this, I mean the Moratorium that they have agreed to — that these laws from the subregional level and at the various national levels are incorporated into national laws, that the

various security agencies, armed forces, police and other security apparatus become an active part of the implementation of the Moratorium. At the national level, the laws have to move on to provincial or regional levels, and down to the local levels. I think the example of Mali that was cited here, where this kind of decentralization has taken place, obviously needs to be encouraged and promoted, so that people should be sensitized down to the local grass-roots level as to what it is that needs to be done to curtail the activities of mercenaries and to reduce the spread — if not totally eliminate — these weapons which continue to be a threat to the peace and stability of West Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) — two or three minutes, please.

Mr. Sall (*spoke in French*): I would just like to say that it is true that currently the first problem facing the implementation of the Moratorium is the need to maintain the strong political involvement that existed at the outset of this effort. I believe that, as the problems have become increasingly serious, we must continue to encourage political commitment on the part of the States and Governments of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

With regard to the technical questions that have been raised, I believe that the most difficult challenge we experienced was overcoming the ministerial competition that arose in each country with regard to the chairmanship of national commissions. That caused us delays in many countries. As sovereignty issues are often negotiated by ministries for foreign affairs at the same time that operations are carried out by defence and security ministries, it is not always easy to harmonize the problems that arise between the various ministries in an effort to have them understand each other and engage in collective efforts. That was not an easy thing to do. In fact, we worked on this issue quite a bit this year.

I also wish to refer to the availability of resources. I believe that one of the major constraints facing national commissions is the lack of necessary resources, beginning with human resources. Civil servants are appointed and are also responsible for other duties on a full-time basis: they work in ministries and public administration and therefore cannot systematically manage a programme to combat the proliferation of arms. But we have seen that even though civil servants may be otherwise occupied, the roles of facilitators and coordinators have made a difference. On the issue of financial resources, every operation I have mentioned — including training, border control, establishing registers and collecting and destroying arms — stems from national commissions, which actually carry out operations on the ground. Our resources are therefore quite limited. I wish to emphasize that only Guinea — and, to a lesser extent, Mali — have been able to mobilize strictly bilateral financing from donors to dedicate to programmes to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in their countries. Other ECOWAS countries are financed through national commissions solely from the funds that the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) can provide them. The idea is therefore to assist every country to establish a national programme that will make it possible to organize the mobilization of resources from international community donors.

In that vein, I am pleased to report to the Security Council that the Programme is trying to establish a national portfolio on non-proliferation in the 15 countries. We would hope to organize a round table some time around December 2003, at which we would invite the international community to assist us to face up to security issues on a country-by-country and programme-by-programme basis, while bearing in mind the specificities of each country.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the African Union and for Senegalese Abroad. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Gadio (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to extend my warm and fraternal congratulations to you, Mr. President. We are very proud to see you, an African, in a leadership role at the Security Council — which finds itself at a major crossroads in this month of March 2003. May God continue to guide and inspire you in your sensitive but noble mission.

My delegation associates itself with previous speakers in commending the very wise and appropriate choice of today's topic, which sums up a concern shared in the West African community, given that we

are determined to find long-lasting solutions to the twin problems crucial to peace and security in our subregion. Those problems are the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the activities of mercenaries.

Before going any further, I would like to invoke and embrace the memory of our fallen friend and companion Mr. Kofi Panou, former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo, who fought at our side for peace and security in our subregion and on our continent.

The eruption of identity-based and irredentist movements, the increased appetite for certain natural resources — both on and beneath the ground — domestic, social and political schisms and trans-border conflicts have resulted in the illegal influx of a large number of small arms and light weapons into West Africa and in the rise of mercenary operations. Those weapons are accessible, inexpensive and easy to use. There are over 500 million such weapons throughout the world, and they have been employed in every conflict to beset West Africa. Wherever they have appeared, they have brought with them death and desolation, undermined efforts at economic and social development and compromised attempts at conflict resolution that have been the result of implementing acidulously negotiated agreements. Moreover, they have always served to promote the rise of both domestic and foreign criminal gangs, which have been lured by the appeal of easy money obtained through extortion and murder.

That picture is made all the more sombre by the recent emergence of mercenary war dogs who have come from distant and neighbouring lands, often brandishing the title of agents of "military companies". That euphemism is hardly convincing, judging from their terrible ability to be disruptive in the countries where they are brought to work. West Africa has already been a theatre of operations for those pathetic individuals, who have illustrated the hideous damage they can do in their flagrant denial of fundamental human rights in places such as the Biafra region of Nigeria, Benin and Guinea.

We must make no mistake about it. As stated in 1997 by Mr. Enrique Bernales Ballesteros, Special Rapporteur on mercenaries for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, mercenaries have the terrible ability to "undermine the maintenance of public order, the sovereign exercise of State authority and a nation's territorial integrity". Added to those burdens are the economic disruption and the fratricidal division of the mercenary phenomenon.

Faced with all those dangers, it is welcome that both the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union have been proactively developing appropriate instruments. In fact, for a number of years, West Africa has been giving high priority to combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. The determination of the leadership of our subregion was embodied in the 1998 adoption by the ECOWAS Abuja Summit of the Moratorium on the Import, Export and Manufacture of Light Weapons. That important progress was supported by the establishment of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), which, along with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), aims at establishing a culture of peace and security in the ECOWAS region. In that connection, we would like to commend the excellent leadership of our countryman Mr. Ibrahima Sall. We encourage him to continue his fight as he makes his appeal to the international community for more resources.

I can only add to that incomplete list by mentioning the Organization of African Union's adoption of the Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa, which is one of the most important instruments available to combat this terrible phenomenon.

Five months after the Security Council held a public meeting on small arms and light weapons the Guinean presidency had the very good idea of re-examining this point, adding a question that goes hand in hand with it: mercenary activities. In so doing, at a time when the international community's attention is riveted by the Iraqi crisis, Guinea was quite right to recall just how pressing this critical problem is in West Africa, since it has a direct impact on the lives of millions of people.

Senegal, all the same, believes that an end must be put to the subregional omertà — the code of silence, which continues to be the hallmark of political regimes in our subregion who, in plain sight of all, have mastered the art of spreading this widespread curse of small arms and those who use them — professional or apprentice, large or small — whom we call

mercenaries. We know these regimes. The international community often points a finger at them. The supreme irony of it all is that we are the ones who sometimes come to the defense of such regimes.

West Africa also calls for United Nations inspectors and international fact-finding commissions that will be able to prove without any shadow of doubt the bloody crimes of some political regimes in the subregion so that those regimes can be ostracized from the community of civilized and peaceful nations and disarmed or neutralized, one way or another. There lies the only legitimate debate today for the millions of displaced persons, children crippled by shameful mines and inconsolable weeping mothers from countries that have been abruptly overwhelmed by rebellions that destroy our already fragile futures.

While commending warmly my friend and bother François Fall, I would like to emphasize several other measures that my delegation believes should be taken and that the international community should initiate or support so as to stop once and for all the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary operations.

First, there is a need to strengthen and strictly apply all instruments concerning the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities and to review the Organization of African Unity Convention on mercenaries, given the new manifestations of this scourge and its links to terrorism. There should also be a mechanism to identify and trace the illegal flows of small arms and light weapons.

Secondly, there is a need for transparency in commercial and brokerage activities linked to arms; a ban on centres for training specialized mercenaries in subversive activities, who are discretely called "private military companies"; measures to bring to justice mercenaries involved in criminal activities related to terrorism and to extradite them, in keeping with domestic law and international instruments.

Thirdly, there is a need to promote programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, who might be tempted to engage in mercenary activities.

Fourthly, monitoring the transfer of small arms between States that produce and those that purchase them should be strengthened, in particular by using a twin tracking and marking system.

Fifthly, a special United Nations mechanism should be established to control inspections for West Africa, complemented by the creation of international commissions of inquiry, certain of whose conclusions could be submitted to the International Criminal Court. Senegal would particularly like to hear the opinion of members of our forum, especially our development partners on the Security Council.

In conclusion, real progress still must be made if we wish to extract our subregion from the quagmire of the dual ills of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities. Let us hasten to act, rather than always react, so that the shadowy network, which shamelessly brings together unscrupulous arms merchants and blood-stained mercenaries allied with some of our leaders, will dissolved once and for all and so, that West Africa, reconciled with itself, finds again the virtuous path to peace and prosperity.

On this hopeful note, Mr. President I congratulate you again on choosing this a critical topic. I wish you success in your presidency, with so many pressing items on the Security Council's agenda this month.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal for his warm and fraternal words, the encouragement he has given my country and the constructive proposals that he has made.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): We want to welcome you back to the Security Council, Mr. President, and to thank you for bringing the issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries to the Security Council today. We think that this is a very important initiative on the part of your country.

We are also pleased to welcome your minister colleagues from the African continent who have joined this meeting today, as well as the representative of the Programme for Cooperation and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), the executive secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the representative of the African Union.

I would also like to thank your delegation for drafting the non-paper on the subject of our meeting today, which informs our current discussion. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons contributes to violence and suffering around the world, but the

situation in West Africa is particularly grave. The catalogue of conflict in the region is long, and regrettably the indiscriminate traffic in small arms and the use of mercenaries only exacerbates the situation.

To help stem the tide of violence, in October 1998 ECOWAS declared a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of light weapons. The international community, including the United States, praised ECOWAS in 1998 for this landmark effort. The Moratorium called for the creation of individual national commissions to be the focal points for the implementation of measures at the State level.

Since that year, little progress has been made. It is disappointing that some States have not developed functional national commissions. Despite the 1998 Moratorium, West African societies remain awash with small arms and light weapons. Now is the time to complete this effort and move from political declaration to full practical implementation.

We continue to support all signatories to the ECOWAS Moratorium in their commitment, renewed in 2001, to carry out its mandate. It is crucial that ECOWAS members themselves take the necessary steps to effectively enforce their own Moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons by fully establishing functional national commissions and implementing the Code of Conduct at the State level.

As my colleague Richard Williamson said in the October meeting on small arms and light weapons, the United States believes that solutions to the problem of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must be practical and effective. The most effective ways of preventing small and light weapons from getting into the hands of those who will misuse them are implementing and enforcing strict export and import controls and strong arms-brokering laws, ensuring the security of national small arms and light weapons stockpiles, and destroying excess weapons.

Additionally, we must address the combatants themselves, not just the weapons they wield. The critical process of reintegration as a component of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) offers hope for soldiers who have known only violence and destruction. In Sierra Leone, 48,000 weapons have been turned in since the end of the conflict there.

Former rebels have been brought into camps where they have been given tools to begin the process of reintegration into society. Rebels have been given monetary payments that correspond to their ranks and were provided training to assist them in finding and obtaining jobs.

The international community, including individual States, such as Sweden, Norway, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Canada and France, has contributed generously to the implementation of the ECOWAS Moratorium and to the rebuilding of societies.

The United States has recently undertaken bilateral projects with Senegal and Guinea to destroy tens of thousands of excess small arms and light weapons. We have provided training and communications equipment to Guinea and Sierra Leone to assist them in controlling their borders with Liberia. We have also funded aerial surveillance to monitor illicit trafficking in the Mano River border region. We have funded a joint training programme to instruct Nigerian law enforcement officials on tracing and interdicting illicit small arms. The United States remains committed in its support for both the Security Council embargoes in the West African region and the ECOWAS Moratorium.

My delegation urges ECOWAS member States to establish effective national commissions and to implement the Code of Conduct for the Moratorium, as mandated in 1998 and 1999. I also urge ECOWAS member States and those States that supply illicit small arms to comply with two pertinent paragraphs in the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in July 2001.

Paragraph 12 of the Programme recalls,

> "the obligations of States to fully comply with arms embargoes decided by the United Nations Security Council in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations." (*A/CONF.192/15, article 12*)

Paragraph 13 declares that States believe,

> "that Governments bear the primary responsibility for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects and, accordingly,

should intensify their efforts to define the problems associated with such trade and find ways of resolving them." (*article 13*)

As we all approach the 2003 biennial review meeting that will be held here in New York in July, my delegation strongly urges all Governments to provide national reporting on efforts taken to implement the United Nations Programme of Action for Small Arms and Light Weapons to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs. It is only through full, candid reporting by States in affected regions that the international community can take stock of progress made or lack thereof in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action and properly assess priorities for international action on small arms and light weapons in the future.

The United States is aware of the tragic history of the conflict in West Africa. We are ready and committed to work with all Security Council members and ECOWAS member States to find practical and effective ways to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries that are threatening peace and security in West Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Permanent Representative of the United States for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Pleuger (Germany): I would like to thank you at the outset, Mr. President, for scheduling this open debate on small arms and mercenaries in West Africa. The world holds its breath in view of the imminent danger of a major military confrontation in the Middle East with potential global consequences that no one can foresee. But we feel that it is equally important not to forget that there are conflicts in other parts of the world, involving not weapons of mass destruction but small arms, not highly trained, specialized soldiers but mercenaries and child soldiers, which nonetheless cause tremendous human plight, misery and death.

It is not easy to add to the list of important and useful thoughts that have already been put forward in this room today. However, I would like to stress a number of points that, from the viewpoint of the German Government, are particularly important and relevant.

First, it would not suffice to try to cure only the symptoms. In other words, we need to focus on the root causes of armed conflict that incite demand for the import of weapons and invite trafficking with them. Furthermore, we need to raise awareness of the mechanism that makes conflicts of interest turn into armed violence. Thirdly, we must ensure that small arms and light weapons get into the hands only of Government authorities and that they are firmly kept there. In this context, the trade in weapons and their further whereabouts need to be made much more transparent, and those having acquired them need to be held accountable for their further use.

With the Bamako Declaration and the Programme of Action of the Conference on Small Arms held in July 2001, important guidelines have been supplied with regard to the measures I have just cited. We need action, determination and, above all, a firm conviction among the parties involved of the need to implement the measures necessary to limit and eventually to stop the flow of illicit small arms and light weapons.

The Governments of the countries affected by armed conflict have a responsibility to adhere to certain standards of good governance, order and discipline. Governments have to show leadership that their populations can follow. The populations are encouraged to do their share in promoting peace and security. There are encouraging examples of grassroots movements taking their fate in their own hands and trying to come to terms with the problems of the reckless and irresponsible use of small arms and light weapons. In this context, I would like to warmly commend the work done by the women of the Mano River Union. We need more of that to happen. The declaration and prolongation of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) import Moratorium on small arms and light weapons is an encouraging example of a regional initiative in a region that is most seriously affected by civil wars and armed conflicts. It is most welcome as a step to reduce import demand and to control legitimate imports in order to prevent illegal imports.

On the other hand, donor countries are called upon to support efforts made in West Africa to come to terms with the use of small arms and battling mercenaries. This can be done in many different ways. The focus of aid work should be on capacity building, for instance in the area of setting up national disarmament commissions, training trainers and providing know-how in different ways. Mercenaries need to have a realistic alternative for creating a decent

life. I would also like to mention the concept of arms for development, that is, the surrender of weapons in exchange for aid to the communities of those giving up their weapons. Policies have to be elaborated in such a way that the whole community will benefit from the readiness of armed persons to rid themselves of their weapons, not for the sake of personal profit but in order to benefit their own community as a whole. In this context, I would like to mention the Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament Measures, which, under German chairmanship has coordinated a number of hands-on projects relating to the problems stemming from the surplus of small arms in West Africa.

Arms producing countries need to play by the rules regarding weapons transfers. Germany is in full support of the ECOWAS Moratorium and respects it, in line with European Union decisions and its political principles on the export of military equipment. We advocate strict adherence to export criteria for weapons. Not fuelling the conflict with the delivery of weapons and ensuring that legal weapons arrive at the legitimate certified end-user, in line with the exchanged information, are key elements of such criteria which we would like to see more widely accepted.

Last but not least, I wish to mention one piece of the disarmament puzzle which too often is overlooked or considered a soft issue: disarmament education, especially with regard to the recruitment of child soldiers. Disarmament starts at a very early age. Children need to learn that conflicts are not to be resolved through violence, but rather through intelligent bargaining. Children need to learn that the strength gained through the possession of a weapon does not help find lasting solutions. There are commendable efforts being made to develop such educational programmes, which also include West Africa. The work of The Hague Appeal for Peace, operating together with the United Nations Foundation and the Secretariat Department for Disarmament Affairs, is just one example. I appeal to the donor community to give more attention to these efforts.

Let me close by expressing my sincere hope that, for one of the regions of Africa most severely plagued by armed conflict, sustainable solutions will be found to bring a basic degree of stability to its peoples, and that this debate will give new impulses towards that goal.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Germany for his kind words.

The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.4720 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4720th meeting

Tuesday, 18 March 2003, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Fall	(Guinea)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	Chile	Mr. Valdés
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Schumacher
	Mexico	Mr. Pujalte
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Spain	Ms. Jiménez de la Hoz
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Howe-Jones
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

03-28492 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Djangoni-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) took a seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): Before opening the floor to speakers, I wish to remind all participants that they must limit their statements to no more than seven minutes in order to enable the Council to work efficiently within its timetable. I thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

The first speaker on my list this afternoon is His Excellency Mr. Roland Y. Kpotsra, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Minister, I would like to extend to you my country's condolences and those of other Council members upon the death of our brother, Koffi Panou, and we would like to extend these condolences to your country and to the family of our beloved brother.

I now invite you to make your statement.

Mr. Kpotsra (Togo)(*spoke in French*): Mr. President, first and foremost, I wish to welcome your assumption of the presidency of this prestigious United Nations body during this particularly sensitive time when the world is wavering between peace and war. It is a sensitive period, because of tensions, conflicts and threats of war prevailing all over that are continuing or will not fail to cause many victims and destruction.

Sir, my delegation is convinced that this sad state of affairs in the world can only reinforce your commitment to the search and the strengthening of international peace and security.

In addressing these warm congratulations to you, my delegation would like to assure you that we have great confidence in your eminent qualities as a skilled diplomat to successfully conduct the Council's proceedings during this month when all are looking at the Council.

Mr. President, by including on the Council's agenda the question entitled "Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa", your country, Guinea, is once again demonstrating its unswerving devotion to peace, security, friendship and the policy of good-neighbourliness. Our Government welcomes this fortunate initiative, which again provides an opportunity to the international community to assess the crises in the subregion and to determine in the light of the assessment that it makes the best ways and means to provide West Africa with the political stability and security that it so much wishes, with a view to ensuring that the integration policy can flourish.

Before going any further, I should like to bring your attention to an excerpt from a speech delivered on Friday, 7 March, by the President of the Togolese Republic, His Excellency Mr. Gnassingbé Eyadema, in the presence of His Excellency John Kufuor, President of Ghana, the current President of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), at the opening of the Third ECOWAS Trade Fair:

> "By creating ECOWAS, we sought an ideal to become fact: to build a vast common market for harmonious trade and development in a space of peace and security. We rightly think that the peoples and nations of West Africa are as capable of taking their own fate in their hands, to succeed in integrating their economies and to work together to ensure their prosperity, as have the peoples in Europe, America and Asia. We are aware that no development effort is possible without peace and security. Hence, we have decided to give pride of place to dialogue, working together and preventive diplomacy to avoid having conflicts distract us from economic progress.
>
> "We have also come to understand that ensuring the free movement of people and goods — which is an essential component of economic integration — peace and security must be guaranteed to all member States of the Community.

"Unfortunately, like other parts of the continent, our subregion continues to be at the mercy of fratricidal conflicts that threaten development efforts and subregional integration.

"Day after day, the climate of insecurity — which began in December 1989 with the Liberian war — is spreading like wildfire. As if part of some domino effect, since 19 September 2002, Côte d'Ivoire too has been beset by civil war.

"That succession of armed conflicts is simply the direct result of the free movement of light weapons and of the recruitment of unemployed young people who are trained in ECOWAS member States to attack other member States. If we want such wars to stop, we must do our utmost to fully implement the Protocol on Non-Aggression we signed at Lagos on 22 April 1978, precisely to ensure that the territory of a member State cannot be used for the recruitment, training or arming of assailants who would attack another member State.

"Only strict respect for the Protocol will make it possible for our subregion to avoid the fratricidal wars that lead to the loss of many human lives, destroy property, maim people, drive millions of men, women and children into homeless exile and delay economic development and prosperity in our States."

That statement by Togo's Head of State conveys the steadfast nature of our country's foreign policy, which seeks to make peace, security and political stability the fundamental goals of its diplomacy. It is for that reason that Togo is working tirelessly to find a peaceful resolution to conflicts and to establish peaceful and good-neighbourly relations of cooperation with our immediate neighbours and with other countries. That Togolese presidential statement also demonstrates Togo's commitment to contribute as much as it can to ensuring that West Africa becomes a region of peace and an area that promotes economic integration throughout our continent of Africa.

The item on our agenda illustrates the fragility and precariousness of West Africa, particularly as a result of the conflicts in the Mano River region and the civil war in Côte d'Ivoire. With the conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, our region has been moving for over a decade towards a state of instability marked by the length of those conflicts and by the scope of their humanitarian, economic and social consequences.

The end of the war in Sierra Leone led us to believe that there would be a climate of peace; but then Côte d'Ivoire plunged into turmoil. How could one explain that progressive extension of war from State to State in our subregion? Looking at the situation, one could say that the ease with which armed insurrection and war take place so easily in West Africa is due to the proliferation and circulation of small arms and light weapons and to the ease with which those who provoke such conflicts are able to find the necessary local and foreign human resources willing and able to undertake destabilizing actions, aggression and war.

However, that state of affairs can also be explained by the inconclusive results of two essential phases of the consolidation of peace. The first phase is the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants in order to strengthen peace; the second is the implementation of economic and social measures conducive to reconstruction and to reducing social injustice.

As the Council will recall in that regard, many measures were put forth to strengthen peace after the tragic conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, they did not meet expectations. The pledges of financial contributions to bring about the effective and seamless disarmament, demobilization the reintegration of former combatants and the reconstruction of economic and social infrastructure have generally not been honoured. It is therefore important to acknowledge that policies to re-establish peace have had very limited success, thereby promoting the proliferation and circulation of light weapons and the resurgence of mercenary activity. That activity has often occurred because former combatants and child soldiers are prepared to provide their services and expertise whenever conflict erupts or when there are uprisings against constitutionally established regimes.

Given the dangerous situation that has emerged as a result of the proliferation of light weapons, on 31 December 1998, the heads of State and Government of ECOWAS adopted a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa for a renewable period of three years. That was followed by the establishment of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and

Development (PCASD) in March 1999 as a body to support the Moratorium. Progress has been made in the implementation of those two mechanisms, namely, through the setting up of national commissions to combat the proliferation and illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, the training of armed and security forces and the collection and destruction of light weapons. All of that justifies the importance and utility of such bodies to our countries.

The essential goals of those mechanisms require that the international community further strengthen and make more effective its support through appropriate financial assistance that makes it possible for the mechanisms to better carry out their missions to deal with the problems caused by the flow of these weapons. The porous nature of borders makes it possible for such weapons to, among other things, nurture banditry, insecurity and cross-border crime. Similarly, the international community must provide considerable assistance to our States so that we can work to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted by the United Nations Conference on the subject that was held in July 2001. A review of that Programme will take place in a few months.

Togo is a party to the Organization of African Unity's Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa, which was adopted on 3 July 1977 at Libreville. We are also a party to the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, which was adopted under the aegis of the United Nations on 4 December 1989. We are therefore very concerned about the use of mercenaries in the current conflict in West Africa. We vigorously condemn the use of mercenaries in conflicts, and urge countries and others involved in providing the services of mercenaries to end their activities for the sake of peace, security, friendly relations, brotherhood and cooperation among our countries. At the international level, the United Nations Convention against Mercenarism should be further implemented and adapted to deal with new pernicious forms of mercenarism today.

We are fully aware of the fact that the major objectives of ECOWAS cannot be achieved without first establishing lasting peace, security and harmonious understanding between our member States. Accordingly, Togo continues to attach special importance to the Protocol on Non-Aggression signed at Lagos on 22 April 1978, the scrupulous adherence to which will spare West Africa from the challenges posed by the wars it is experiencing.

In accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, the provisions of the Protocol stipulate that member States must refrain from threatening or using force against the territorial integrity and political independence of other member States. It also forbids States from committing, encouraging or supporting any acts of subversion, hostility or aggression against other member States. States must also prevent such damaging acts on the part of resident foreigners or non-resident aliens who are using their territory as a base for operations. The Council will agree with my delegation that the Protocol provides a basis for healthy political cooperation among ECOWAS States in order to decisively prohibit any actions that may impair their sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity.

We are convinced of the relevance and positive nature of the Protocol. My country would therefore like to reiterate what President Eyadema said at a recent CENSAD summit held in Niamey by the members of the Community of Sahel and Saharan States. He stated that every member State must fully respect and implement the letter and spirit of the Protocol, as the economic integration that will promote the prosperity and happiness of the people of West Africa depends upon it.

It is a fact that the proliferation and illicit circulation of light weapons and the use of mercenaries in West Africa poses a serious threat to international peace and security. Our States must act to further pool their efforts to eliminate these factors of political instability that are also capable of destroying economic and social infrastructure. Particular attention should also be given to the traffic carried out by independent intermediaries who facilitate the illicit trade in light weapons between manufacturers and armed groups. That must by achieved by strengthening national legislation in this area and by increasing cooperation between States in the field of border control.

Lasting peace and security, which our countries wish so much to see and for which they are actively working to lay the foundations, cannot be established unless the international community makes a genuine and determined commitment, through assistance that is

more sustained and is commensurate with our goals in the implementation of policies for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and the financing of peace-building processes.

There is also a need for relevant and rigorous measures to prevent the recruitment of mercenaries from the usual countries of origin and for the countries that produce and export weapons, particularly certain members of the former Warsaw Pact, to commit to a true ban on the illicit export of weapons to African countries in general, and ECOWAS States in particular. This is the only way that the States of ECOWAS can hope to stem the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and counter mercenary activities, in order to preserve the peace and security that are so dear to each of our nations, and to assure the harmonious development of countries of the subregion.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Togo for his kind words addressed to me and my country.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are very glad to see you, Sir, preside over the Council. We thank you for convening today's meeting and welcome in this Chamber the Ministers for Foreign Affairs from the Economic Community of West African States.

Today's meeting is further proof of the great interest that the international community and the Security Council have shown in cooperating to resolve the complex problems of maintaining and restoring international peace and security on the African continent. It is proof of our common aspiration to work out effective strategies to combat the scourge of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities.

Russia firmly condemns mercenary activities and has consistently supported international efforts to eradicate this criminal phenomenon. Such services have become particularly in demand in the recent decades, during which armed mercenaries have been used in the struggle against legitimate Governments that had freed themselves from colonial dependence on certain States. Everyone is aware of the tragic consequences of the involvement of mercenaries in regional and national conflicts. We have become aware of them from the tragic examples in Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Angola and other countries.

Mercenary activities are highly unethical and illegal, according to the generally recognized principles of international law. An important landmark in the process of establishing universal approaches to defining the illegal nature of this phenomenon was the adoption of the first Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions, which fleshed out the legal content of the concept of a mercenary. The entry into force in 2001 of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries has significantly expanded the means available to combat this scourge.

Without a doubt, the establishment of effective mechanisms to counter mercenary activities requires a corresponding measure of political will in order to consistently carry out international standards in national legal systems. Current Russian law includes special norms that carry criminal penalties not only for direct involvement of mercenaries in armed conflict, but also for activities for their recruitment, training, financing and other logistical support.

Recently within the United Nations there has been substantially heightened interest in the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and its impact on regional security. Of great significance in this regard were the 2001 Conference and the Programme of Action adopted at it. This summer there will be the first biennial review conference on the implementation of the Programme, which undoubtedly will facilitate the further resolution of pressing problems connected with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

Many practical questions related to the supply of small arms and light weapons, including brokerage, end-user certificates and others, will be discussed during the meeting of the group of governmental experts to be convened by the Secretary-General. We believe that the Security Council should focus its attention on instances in which the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons is directly related to conflict situations in Africa that are on its agenda.

The Russian Federation has consistently called for tough measures in cases in which weapons are supplied by illegal armed groups. We believe the Security Council is justified in imposing an embargo on arms shipments in conflict regions. This certainly will have a positive impact, and the examples of Sierra

Leone, Angola and other crisis situations have convinced us of this.

During the past years we have managed to fine-tune the oversight mechanism for monitoring the Council's weapons embargoes. This has been made very clear by the regular reports of the chairpersons of the relevant sanctions committees. Of course, much remains to be done, particularly to enhance the effectiveness of monitoring of the investigation of the facts of embargo violations.

We consider it justified that in the context of carrying out peacekeeping operations under United Nations auspices, the peace agreements between the parties should include specific provisions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants. It is also essential to endeavour to include in the mandate of such operations adequate resources to collect and destroy illegal small arms and light weapons used in conflicts. It is important to help countries of the West African region to implement measures to monitor and combat the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Of great significance is developing practical measures to combat the illegal shipments of small arms and light weapons at the preventive stage and in the post-conflict phase of settlement. Regional organizations have a solid body of useful experience, including in Africa. We believe that the measures proposed within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — such the establishment of an information-exchange mechanism in the area of small arms and light weapons, the introduction of a regional register that would provide data on the national stocks of such weapons in the ECOWAS countries and other practical steps — deserve to be approved and supported.

It is also necessary to take steps to improve domestic legislation to stop small arms and light weapons from falling into the illicit trade system. Above all in countries in which such legislation is lacking, steps must be taken to upgrade and codify a national system of export controls and to establish a broad-based exchange of information between States regarding existing legislation and practical experience in this area.

We hope that today's meeting under your presidency, Sir, will allow us to move forward on all these issues.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Pujalte (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country is very pleased that you, Sir, are presiding over the Security Council today. We consider you to be a great friend of Mexico. We hope with all our heart that this workshop will be a success and that its conclusions will promote discussion in the Council on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, links with mercenaries and the threats they represent to peace and security in West Africa.

We have listened very closely to the opinions and proposals put forward by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the Interim Commissioner of the African Union, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the representative of the Chairman of ECOWAS, the representative of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, and ministers of West Africa on this situation. It cuts across all borders, because small arms and light weapons and their connection to the use of mercenaries exist in other conflict regions.

Mexico attaches great importance to the follow-up and full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Combat, Prevent and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in 2001, as well as the proper coordination of activities among the Security Council, including the design of mandates for peacekeeping operations; the other organs and programmes of the United Nations; and regional bodies and agreements with specific mandates to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Members of the Council periodically examine developments in the situation in Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. One of the greatest causes for concern in our discussions has been the excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons and their destabilizing effect on the region of West Africa, in particular on the countries of the Mano River Union.

We note that the illicit flows of those weapons have not been stopped, despite the arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council. We therefore call once again on all countries, particularly those countries that export arms, to comply fully with the relevant

resolutions of the Security Council. Similarly, we support accompanying all legal transfers of arms with end-user certificates as an effective tool for combating the diversion of, and illicit trade in, small arms and light weapons.

We encourage the States of West Africa to carry out the necessary steps for full compliance with the Moratorium agreed in 1998 on the importation of this category of arms. Those efforts, as well as compliance with the commitments entered into under the United Nations Programme of Action, will lead to a reduction in the amount of arms available to use by mercenaries.

The recruitment, financing, training and use of mercenaries are a cause of concern to the international community because of their responsibility for violations of human rights and the provisions of international humanitarian law, and due to their links to the illicit trade in arms and diamonds and other criminal activities in which they are involved.

Mexico is committed to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and has demonstrated its concern for that trade's links with transnational organized crime, the illicit traffic of drugs and international terrorism, as well as its negative impact on democracy and the development of countries. In that context, Mexico promoted the adoption of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Munitions, Explosives and Other Related Materials and was an active participant in the negotiations on the United Nations Programme of Action and on the complementary protocol of the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, prepared in Vienna.

Mexico is particularly concerned that the presence of mercenaries has been detected in the conflicts in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire because those activities not only contribute to the internal destabilization of those two countries but also constitute a risk for the stability and security of Sierra Leone, Guinea and other countries of the subregion. They also impede the access of humanitarian organizations and agencies to the areas where refugees and internally displaced persons are located.

We therefore reiterate the call made by the Security Council in the presidential statement (S/PRST/2002/36) of 13 November 2002 on the situation in Liberia, for States in the region to prevent armed individuals from using their national territory to prepare and launch attacks on neighbouring countries. We also support the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and the United Nations to put an end to the practice of the use of mercenaries, including child soldiers, in conflicts in West Africa.

I would like to mention the following suggestions to prevent, combat and eradicate the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries in this region of the African continent.

The lessons learned in the disarmament process in Sierra Leone should be taken into account in order to carry out similar actions in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The collection and destruction of surplus arms should be an integral part of peace agreements in the subregion. The supervision of disarmament and destruction activities by regional organizations and the United Nations will provide a guarantee for preventing excessive accumulations and the destabilizing effects of these weapons.

The international community must continue to support programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in Sierra Leone, as the lack of financial resources has meant that a significant number of young people move to conflict zones in the region where they can obtain an income by taking up arms. The Security Council must support the use of programmes of that type in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire.

The countries of West Africa must strengthen mechanisms for political consultation in order to deal with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the phenomenon of mercenaries. The forums provided by ECOWAS, the Mano River Union and the Rabat Process must be used fully to benefit security, safety, stability and peace in the subregion.

The Security Council must take into account the regional context of the conflicts in Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire and promote mechanisms of coordination and cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in the search for peaceful solutions to these crisis situations.

Finally, allow me to express Mexico's appreciation to the delegation of Guinea for preparing and leading negotiations on the annex to the draft resolution to be adopted at the end of this meeting.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Mexico for his kind words addressed to me and for his suggestion.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is His Excellency Mr. Pierre Osho, Minister of State for Defence of Benin. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Osho (Benin) (*spoke in French*): First, I would like to associate myself with preceding speakers in extending my sincere and enthusiastic congratulations to our brother, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea, who has the honour of presiding over this meeting of the Security Council during this delicate month of March 2003. This is especially so in light of the burning acuteness of the present international political situation, which, as everyone knows, is almost completely polarized with respect to the Iraqi crisis. To note the speech given a few hours ago, the holding of a workshop such as this ran the risk of seeming a non-event. But, very fortunately, that is not the case when you consider the number and the stature of the participants, in particular, the effective presence of Secretary-General Kofi Annan at this meeting's opening. I would also like to warmly welcome the positive inspiration of the Guinean Minister for Foreign Affairs — the President of the Security Council — to inscribe for reflection by this United Nations body this matter of concern for West African States — the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries.

Regarding the topic submitted to us for our individual and collective reflection, and speaking after a series of speakers, there are not too many new things for me to say. The essential things have been said, particularly by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, whose approach and conclusions, the relevance of his ideas, as well as the relevant statement of the honourable representative of the United Kingdom, I would like to publicly support.

Benin believes that we must stop making speeches on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Rather, we must look to specific and effective actions. In that context, Benin believes that we must act upon the source and the fundamental reasons for two scourges — the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries. Our specific proposals in that regard are the following.

We must establish an international convention that strictly limits the purchase of light weapons of war only to States and national armies, aiming particularly at the ability to trace weapons and at supplying them through official channels.

Secondly, we must put in place at the international level provisions related to the dismantling of bodies, firms and international networks that sell weapons that do not have the agreed or official status of an exporting State of these light weapons of war. Benin draws the attention of all participants to the fact that poor countries such as ours have neither the technology nor the logistics to sell or manufacture, or to organize the flows or the delivery of weapon stockpiles. Therefore, countries that have this technology and these logistics, both in terms of manufacturing weapons and transporting, shipping and delivering them, are, clearly, fully responsible in this regard.

Thirdly, we must put in place a United Nations convention for the dismantling of companies and agencies that specialize in so-called military-service-providing activities, which are nothing more than official mercenary companies, militias or private armies. These companies exist and are flourishing in the northern countries. In some southern countries, these companies have set up shop and have begun recruitment through legally placed advertisements. Why is that the case? Because today we increasingly are seeing actions recognizing these companies as providers of government protective services and protective services for official institutions, while in reality, these companies that provide lethal and destabilizing services are nothing but mercenary organizations.

Therefore, we must admit that henceforth our assessment of the question of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and of the use of mercenaries must clearly integrate the empowerment of States, holding them responsible, including groups of nationals, where groups of nationals have been identified as mercenaries. It will no longer suffice to invoke the personal freedom of individuals who have made the choice to engage in an activity, even if that activity is marginal, illegal or illicit. They will not be able to sidestep their responsibility with respect to the State. We will have to admit that individuals, recognized as mercenaries from a particular country, engage, at the same time, the responsibility of States

that have not been able to gain control over their institutions and nationals in illicit activities carried out abroad.

The fourth proposal is that the Security Council should put in place a working group that would design, organize and carry out a media counter-campaign at the international level, against the campaign that we have seen for a while now, a campaign which tends to extol or preach the decriminalization of mercenary activities. We read increasingly in the press — as I did on my way to New York yesterday — specialized articles to the effect that, given their weakness and their lack of money, poor countries are not able to organize their own security and that, as a result, it is legitimate that those States have recourse to certain services and agencies that specialize in security matters. Those companies, however, are the same ones that are the service providers for political groups that organize the destabilization of legal institutions within States.

My fifth proposal — and it is of a general nature — is to act upon the source of these two scourges. Acting upon the source means that it should be understood that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries have as fertile ground misery, poverty, the lack of a political system and institutional democracy, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and endemic underdevelopment that persists in most of the southern countries and in the subregion I come from.

As a result, the global problem of development assistance once again emerges. And, in the search for effective solutions to that problem, there is the problem of assistance to the armies and national police forces of underdeveloped countries. Today, cooperation agreements that have been concluded, whether at the bilateral or the multilateral level, generally and systematically exclude the police and the army from their aims, on the pretext that those are institutions of State sovereignty and that cooperation is limited to economic, technical and financial aspects, among other things.

But how can we create conditions enabling a national army to control the situation within a country's borders, to confront aggression and to protect State institutions, if that army itself is not a well-equipped army, a trained army, an army that does not function with respect for the constitution and for State institutions? The same applies to the police and the national police with regard to public security. As a result, it is increasingly appropriate to consider very seriously the issue of the equipping, arming and technically training national armies and national police forces so that they can become institutions that serve the rule of law and, if the conditions are such, so that we will naturally be able to lend enough help to the countries in which the democratic process is developing harmoniously, to assist the countries in which we observe concrete and significant efforts aimed at good governance. Because it is bad governance — marginalization of a part of the population, of the intelligentsia outside the political sphere — that creates frustration. Once again, that is fertile ground for the recruitment of mercenaries and of those who wish to take up arms to bring about political changes through violence and destabilization.

I shall conclude by expressing the hope that the necessary support will be provided to ECOWAS to enable it to complete the follow-up of the implementation of the Moratorium and all other oversight activities of the national commissions to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister of State for Defence of Benin for the kind words he addressed to me and for his timely proposals.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is His Excellency Mr. Jean de Dieu Somda, Minister for Regional Cooperation of Burkina Faso. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Somda (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to express to you, Sir, our congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March and on the admirable way in which you are carrying out your heavy responsibilities, especially during this period of difficult deliberations in which the future of the world is at stake. To those congratulations, the delegation of Burkina Faso would like to add its thanks for your excellent initiative to organize this workshop on a subject of great urgency for Africa and, more particularly, for our subregion.

Over the past few years, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has provoked and exacerbated a number of armed conflicts throughout the world. That situation has caused human insecurity that is

unprecedented in our history, with particularly grave consequences for women and children, the most vulnerable members of society.

By holding the largest conference ever on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in New York in July 2001, the United Nations expressed a universal concern over the threat that this scourge poses to international peace and security. The outcome of that conference certainly did not fully meet the expectations of countries affected by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, but it did enable the participating countries to establish an action plan. We must follow up those efforts with other initiatives aimed at ensuring the effective implementation of the action plan.

In that connection, Burkina Faso welcomes the forthcoming first biannual meeting to follow up the conference of July 2001, which will enable us to measure the progress achieved. As we await the recommendations that will result, the current debate should provide here and now an opportunity for the Security Council to renew its support for the worldwide process of combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Moreover, our subregion expects that the Council will support the initiatives already under way in West Africa for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

A new phenomenon has just appeared in West Africa: mercenarism. In fact, the recent crises that have arisen in the subregion have exposed this phenomenon and have shown that even Governments use them to deal with internal rebellions or to neutralize crisis situations. Mercenaries are a source of insecurity. They are not strangers to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; quite to the contrary, they facilitate it and are naturally active in creating a favourable environment for it.

By devoting today's debate to this issue, the Security Council is once again reminding all of us of our responsibilities and of the paramount need to observe the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Convention against mercenarism. It would be appropriate to send a strong signal to those who recruit and train mercenaries that they must put an end to that practice without delay and must refrain from engaging in it in the future.

Burkina Faso has always affirmed its wish for freedom and peace within its borders and in all other countries. But we must emphasize here that the armed conflicts and rebellions that have erupted in certain countries bordering Burkina Faso have naturally promoted the circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons from those zones into our country, spawning a certain kind of cross-border criminality and deepening insecurity for our country and for the entire subregion.

Our country's geographical position makes controlling our borders difficult, which requires effective cooperation with neighbouring countries to try to eliminate that insecurity.

To curb this situation, which we are facing on a daily basis and which is creating a certain insecurity both nationally and subregionally, Burkina Faso has taken an active part in the process that led to the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Arms in West Africa. That process was held on 1 November 1998 in Abuja alongside the twenty-first session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is within this framework of searching for solutions to the problems of insecurity that Burkina Faso has given a lot of attention nationally, subregionally and internationally to all of the ongoing actions and meetings that might effectively contribute to combating the proliferation and illicit trade in small arms.

At the national level, a number of actions to implement the multilateral agreements have been implemented by the Government. First, in 1994, we received a United Nations mission to assess the state of trafficking of small arms in the Sahelo-Saharan zone. This mission, subregional in nature, also went to Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali. Secondly, in 2001 our re-reading of legislation on weapons and civilian munitions in Burkina Faso was necessary as the best means for combating all illegal actions in this area. It meant a hardening up of all measures and sanctions initially scheduled in prior texts. Thirdly, in April 2001, we established a national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. And fourthly, on 24 January 2001, we created a high authority to oversee importation of weapons and their use, which backstops the national commission's action to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons with information that can be provided as to the physical and geographical situation of those weapons that are imported. To show its commitment to

fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, Burkina Faso, in spite of its difficult financial situation, accepted the headquarters of the observation zone and follow-up group number two, the region which takes in Mali, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. The chief of zone in Burkina Faso has been there since 2001. The zone was formally set up in October 2002.

At the subregional level, Burkina Faso has actively participated in all meetings regarding the proliferation of small arms and light weapons held in the subregion, of which the most important meetings were a conference on conflict prevention, disarmament and development in West Africa, held at Bamako from 25 to 29 November 1996; a meeting of experts, held from 8 to 13 March 1998 in Yamoussoukro on the ECOWAS Mechanism and on transferred crime; a workshop organized in Accra from 19 to 21 November 1999 on the establishment of a register and a data base on small arms for ECOWAS member States; an Abuja workshop, held from 24 to 30 September 2000 on elaborating a programme to train the trainers of armed forces and security in combating the proliferation of small arms; a ministerial conference held in Bamako from 25 November to 2 December 2000 to prepare the international conference on the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects; and training courses having to do with border control and weapons control, which was organized by the United States Customs Service from 11 to 24 February 2001.

At the regional level, our country participated in a meeting of the African Group and experts on the illicit trafficking of firearms in Africa, held in Kampala from 10 to 12 January 2000, and a meeting of experts on small arms, organized in Addis Ababa from 14 to 21 May 2000.

At the international level, Burkina Faso actively participated in the development of three additional protocols to the Vienna Convention by the special United Nations committee in Vienna from 1999 to 2001, particularly the protocol on the illicit trafficking of small arms, their elements and munitions. Burkina Faso was also the first African country to ratify this protocol.

We participated in the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms in all Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 21 July 2001.

In conclusion, I would like in particular to emphasize that in all of these actions undertaken at the national level, the financial effort was made to participate in all meetings where the critical problem of combating the proliferation, exportation, importation and the illegal manufacture of small arms and light weapons was debated. It proves that, if need be, Burkina Faso has made a resolute commitment for 15 years now to combat this scourge by all possible means.

My country remains convinced that the fight against the proliferation of small arms cannot be conducted only at the regional or subregional level, or even only at the national level. The chances for success reside solely in the cooperation and synergy of action on the part of the entire international community. The ECOWAS Moratorium shows the strong will of a subregion to pool its potential to combat this scourge that claims many victims each day in its civilian populations. But we cannot succeed without the logistic and financial support from our development partners.

And so the Security Council, in a unique way, has a critical role to play and should become involved in helping to eradicate this phenomenon that undermines the foundation of development — the basis of peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Minister of Burkina Faso for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. De la Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Sir, I would like to thank you for having chosen to draw the Security Council's attention to the question of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities and to have organized this workshop with the Ministers, delegations, States of the subregion and representatives of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Since this morning, the debate has shown that these two scourges are everywhere, but they have a particular impact on West Africa, and they threaten peace and security. They undermine economic development, are at the heart of many excesses, and contravene human rights. These two threats are most often linked. Mercenaries and other armed groups profit from easy access to illicit trafficking in small arms in order to acquire large quantities of weapons at

often ridiculously low prices; and, therefore, they maintain their ability to harm.

We also see in post-conflict situations, in the context of fragile peace efforts, that if these phenomena are not overcome in time, they remain an ongoing impediment to strategies for peace, demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants. In fact, we have seen that mercenaries, once present in a war economy based most often on the exploitation of lucrative natural resources, such as diamonds, drugs or other illicit trafficking, have no trouble at all in recruiting their troops and in acquiring enough small arms to continue their nefarious activity.

Another point that these two things have in common is that they have a trans-border character. We see the ground and air routes that are used by traffickers of small arms that criss-cross the subregion and the groups of mercenaries. These activities know no boundaries. They use country X as a base for their atrocities, and then they gradually export conflict and war economy to the entire subregion.

I would first like to talk about mercenary activities and then small arms and light weapons, since they are related phenomena. For convenience's sake, I will distinguish between them in my statement.

Thousands of combatants, often completely out of control, are traversing the conflict areas of the subregion — from Liberia to Sierra Leone and throughout Côte d'Ivoire. These are mercenaries without borders who leave in their wake only destruction, atrocities, theft, murder, rape and attacks of all kinds, including those carried out in Sierra Leone by so-called "short sleeves" and "long sleeves". We must therefore ask why this phenomenon occurs more frequently in West Africa than it does elsewhere. I would offer one explanation: the first civil war in Liberia.

Combatants in that bloody conflict were never re-integrated into society, or even disarmed. The international community was not up to the task of its responsibilities. A number of those combatants merely reconstituted themselves into the conflict in Sierra Leone, either as rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (RUF) or as part of the Civil Defence Force (CDF) militia. As far as the RUF is concerned, they undoubtedly received support from the Government of Liberia, as the reports of the Groups of Experts on Sierra Leone and Liberia have pointed out. The Security Council reacted by imposing sanctions against the Government of Liberia. Resolution 1343 (2001), which was renewed as resolution 1408 (2002), demanded that the Liberian authorities cut off all ties with the RUF. That decision was necessary but insufficient. Those mercenaries will not disappear, despite the disappearance of the RUF as a rebel army.

Today it is mostly Liberian mercenaries — but also mercenaries from Sierra Leone — who are clashing in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire. That is an inter-Liberian conflict, and not one between the people of Côte d'Ivoire. Those mercenaries are impeding the return to peace. Let us not forget that the ceasefire is being respected in the rest of the country.

The international community must take action in the face of this a phenomenon, and France is determined to do its share. What, then, should we do? The first obligation when confronting the use of mercenaries is to contain them with an effective military presence. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno, has referred to "robust peacekeeping", which is a very good English phrase. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) employed robust peacekeeping successfully against the RUF. French troops are doing the same today in Côte d'Ivoire against the rebel movements in the western part of the country. But robust peacekeeping is only an initial phase. The only long-term solution entails real disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. In Sierra Leone the United Nations has thus demobilized and reintegrated over 46,000 combatants. Liberia must be the next field of action. There is no other way to avoid other countries in the region being convulsed by conflict similar to that which is unfortunately taking place today in Côte d'Ivoire.

I would now like to say a few words about combating the illicit traffic in small arms. We need to take action at the national, regional and international levels in order to eradicate illicit markets and the destabilizing supply of small arms and light weapons in the West African subregion.

In September 1999, France launched an initiative to conclude an international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons. Our goal was to identify the illicit traffic in these weapons. My country is pleased with the work that has been done —

on the basis of joint proposals submitted by France and Switzerland — by the United Nations Group of Experts on this subject with regard to the feasibility of this type of international instrument. We hope that there will be long-term negotiations for an international convention in this field.

France would like to emphasize the importance of producing States having a responsible attitude. If they have not yet done so, they must without delay adopt stringent legislation on export controls.

All of these essential measures are currently being implemented or explored as part of the Programme of Action adopted by the first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in July 2001. The biennial conference to be held in July will provide an opportunity for an initial examination of the work under way. Another meeting, to be held in 2005, will allow us to begin preparations for the 2006 review conference. The Security Council has supported these efforts, as it and the international community should in fact do with regard to efforts under way in the subregion.

In that regard, my country has from the beginning supported the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, which was adopted by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Last February, France announced the renewal of its contribution to the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), which is managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Programme has the specific task of supporting the implementation of the Moratorium. In addition, since 2000, France has supported the operations of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament at Lomé.

The effectiveness of the Moratorium must nevertheless be strengthened, especially as regards establishing exemptions and an end-user certificate that cannot be forged. France hopes that the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS will limit requests for import exemptions made by States to the legitimate security needs of those countries.

On this issue, I would like to know the assessment of partners as regards the progress made in the implementation of the Moratorium and the proposals made to strengthen its effectiveness.

Assistance provided within the PCASED framework to implement the ECOWAS Moratorium has a special role in operational activities. Those activities pertain to the establishment by each State participating in the Moratorium of a national commission and a small arms register. It also entails their training security forces, harmonizing legislation and collecting and destroying confiscated weapons. We have concluded that the results achieved are encouraging. Twelve national commissions have been set up in the 15 participating countries. Nevertheless, additional efforts will have to be made in order that the commissions are truly able to begin their work.

I have one final question for the representatives of the Secretary-General.

The West African subregion is obviously being threatened by a number of conflicts, in particular by the two on our agenda today: the proliferation of small arms and the use of mercenaries. Would it then not be worthwhile for the Secretariat to prepare for the Council a report on the specific risks that exist in this region — as Mr. Annan himself suggested in his report of the summer of 2001 on the issue of conflict prevention? Such a report could highlight the trans-border dimensions of conflicts that are already on the Council's agenda. It would also be based on relevant information at the disposal of the Secretariat and various actors on the ground, such as UNDP. In particular, the report could focus on the problem of small arms and light weapons and of mercenary activities, even if other questions — particularly humanitarian ones, for example — would also be part of that discussion.

I think that this work would facilitate the follow-up on this important question that is being considered by the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of France for his kind words addressed to me.

Before calling upon the next speaker, I would like to ask the Regional Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development to react briefly to some questions that were raised by the representative of France.

Mr. Sall (*spoke in French*): I would simply like to add a small note to the statement of the representative of France, by saying that indeed it has been some time since we last communicated with his country, when our Programme noted 12 national commissions out of 15. We have moved a step forward since then, with a national commission set up in Benin. We therefore now count 13 national commissions out of 15.

As for the functioning of national commissions, once decrees have been signed by the Presidents of the Republic, and ministers or heads of Government have established national commissions, we plan to immediately make financial resources available so they can start their activities. Once the documents have been adopted and executive action has been taken, we plan to immediately finance the national commissions so that they may become operational.

A second point that I believe should be remembered is the final-use certificates. This question frequently comes up, and there has been the possibility of falsifying those certificates. Therefore, what I would like to propose for the coming months in the review in our programme of activity — we do have joint reviews carried out by PCASED and ECOWAS — is to have included on our agenda a review of the end-user certificate to improve it and make it more reliable to meet the problems just raised.

Concerning the specific risks in the subregion, there was a meeting of UNDP resident representatives no more than a month ago in Dakar, after which the idea was adopted of carrying out a study on future security risks in the subregion that would be coordinated with the representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in West Africa, Mr. Ould-Abdallah.

These are all issues that are currently being addressed, and I am pleased that France put its finger precisely where needed. I would not say on a sore spot.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Regional Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development for his clarifications.

Mr. Acuña (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome the holding of this public debate organized as a workshop, a format that is used to deal with topics that are the subject of paramount concern in the Council and the international community because of their relevance in humanitarian, peace and security fields and in the development of peoples.

Chile cannot but share the deep concern about the impact of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in conflicts besetting West Africa and of the increasing illicit intervention of mercenary forces in such conflicts. Those practices contribute considerably to the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, both among the combatants and the affected civilian populations.

In this connection, as was clearly stated this morning by the Secretary-General, the question of the involvement of children in armed conflict acquires a particularly serious prominence. We associate ourselves with his appeal that States of the subregion implement the international instruments prohibiting such practices and develop the necessary machinery to deal with the problem.

As we said in the high-level debate at the United Nations Conference in 2001 on the illicit trafficking in such weapons, we believe it indispensable not only for regions such as West Africa but also for the entire international community to lay down norms to restrict severely the manufacture and trade of small arms and light weapons, to duly registered manufacturers and duly authorized trading agents. In this connection, we are convinced that we must give pride of place to restrictions over freedom of commerce.

With regard to the question of supplying small arms to West Africa, Chile supports the initiative of shoring up cooperation and the exchange of information among States of the region to identify and monitor individuals and entities that are involved in the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and those who are supporting mercenary activities in West Africa.

Similarly, my country recognizes that States of the region must commit themselves more profoundly to the practical implementation of the Moratorium on small arms and light weapons declared in 1998 by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). To that end, particular account must be taken of the recommendations of the recent African conference on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons of 2001.

From the global standpoint, the Security Council, with the assistance of the Secretariat, over years has developed a set of measures to avoid at least in part the devastating consequences of the excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons and their illicit trade by means of measures entailing embargoes on territories where there is conflict and in cases of conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations or peace-building activities.

My delegation would like to thank the President for organizing this seminar, which has enabled us to exchange views in our search for effective solutions to tackle this scourge that is so seriously affecting the region of West Africa. The workshop format used on this occasion, as well as the quality and suitability of the Ministers for Foreign Relations and the other speakers invited to participate have given us a very comprehensive, first-hand picture of the situation and the needs of West Africa. Those elements will enable the Security Council and the Secretariat, as well as Member States, to better prepare their work on those sensitive issues.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Chile for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (spoke in Arabic): We are pleased to see you, Sir, once again, within two weeks, presiding over an important meeting. We would also like to thank you for your initiative, which led to putting this item on the agenda this month, in view of its importance in many parts of the world, and especially West Africa. It is our pleasure to welcome the Ministers and the representatives of the regional organizations who are with us today.

Today's meeting is one in a series of important meetings held by the Security Council on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the phenomenon of mercenaries, in view of their negative effects on West Africa. In that context, we would like to confirm the need to respect international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular respect for national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of Members States, the right to individual or collective self-defence as stipulated by Article 51 of the Charter, the right of peoples to self-determination and the right of Member States to develop their own defence systems to guarantee their national security.

The international community's adoption of the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2001 was an important step forward in dealing with one of the most urgent problems confronting international peace and security: the tragedy of the unruly and excessive proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the illicit trafficking of them. Those are among the most important reasons for the continuation and the fanning of conflicts all over the world. The illicit trade in small arms, especially in West Africa, adds to the violence and contributes to the displacement of innocent people, spreads the culture of violence and undermines the stability of societies. It also undermines the efforts at peace and negotiations, victimizes children, women and vulnerable groups in particular, and creates a climate propitious to the looting of valuable minerals, especially in West Africa.

My delegation believes that the way to deal with this question in general, and in West Africa in particular, lies in encouraging measures designed to restore peace, security and confidence among countries so that resorting to weapons is made less necessary; in promoting measures to prevent conflicts and seeking negotiated solutions; and in taking all necessary measures to control the circulation of small arms and light weapons and their possession, use, transfer and stockpiling. A mechanism must be established to stop the exportation of small arms to non-State entities, such as combatants and mercenaries, and sanctions must be imposed on manufacturers, arms traffickers and middlemen who do that.

We need to give financial and technical support to national programmes aimed at reintegrating the demobilized combatants and those illicitly possessing small arms.

With respect to the question of mercenaries, my delegation believes that armed conflict, illicit trafficking and covert operations by third countries lead, inter alia, to an increase in the demand for mercenaries in the international market. It is part of supply and demand. The recruitment, financing, training and use of mercenaries are part of this. It is a great cause of concern to all countries. It is also a violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The General Assembly and the Security Council have adopted many resolutions condemning the use of mercenaries as a form of external interference in the internal affairs of States in cases where the purpose is to undermine the stability of such countries and to violate their territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty. The relevant United Nations resolutions have emphasized the need to prevent the training, financing and recruitment of mercenaries and their being sent from one country to another. They also underline the need not to offer them any facilities, including financing, in order to equip them and to give them the opportunity to go to other countries. Those resolutions describe the use of mercenaries against national liberation movements struggling against colonialist domination or other forms of foreign occupation as a crime.

The political problems and disputes among neighbouring countries, especially in West Africa, have led to armed conflicts, and the presence of mercenaries is a recognized fact in all these conflicts. That has led to barbaric actions and the continuation of wars. Although the phenomenon of mercenaries is not limited to West Africa, Africa is the continent where it has continued and has done the most harm. We have heard many ministers and representatives confirm that.

Many armed conflicts in Africa are the result of extended political instability and the presence of valuable natural resources that other foreign entities try to control by encouraging and arming their allies within those countries so that they can take power. Later, such acts are carried out by mercenaries who have the individual military skills or by what are called military security companies, which use well-organized small armies of mercenaries in order to calm the situation in any of those countries. It is wrong to think that such private military security companies can help in managing the affairs of the countries in which they operate.

The problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries threatens peace and security in West Africa and other parts of the world. My delegation believes that discussion of this problem in its general framework definitely applies to this important part of the African continent. There is no doubt that we should follow up the question closely and draw the necessary lessons from what has happened in those lands.

Finally, we believe that cooperation with regional and subregional organizations is essential for the achievement of the United Nations objectives of peace and security in West Africa, in all parts of Africa as a whole and in the entire world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is Her Excellency Mrs. Senn, Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of Mali. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Senn (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I wish, at the outset, to express, on behalf of the delegation of Mali, my warmest thanks to the delegation of the sister Republic of Guinea for this initiative of convening this Security Council workshop to consider an issue that has been a concern to our subregion for almost 10 years. I am referring to the circulation of small arms. I wish to pay tribute to the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts in dealing with that matter. My delegation also thanks the various institutions combating the proliferation of light weapons, and it fully agrees with their analysis.

First I wish to briefly refer to two major initiatives that my country has taken on the issue of small arms and light weapons. In 1994, the President of Mali at that time, His Excellency Mr. Alfa Omar Konaré, called for and obtained from the Secretary-General a study on the risks inherent in the illicit circulation of small arms in the Sahelo-Saharan subregion. A year later that led to a United Nations resolution on small arms, which has become a resolution of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on assistance to States to halt the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons and to collect and destroy light weapons.

Secondly, I wish to recall our initiative, subsequently approved by ECOWAS, that a Moratorium be adopted on the import and export of small arms. Speaking about the Moratorium and its characteristics, President Konaré said "In the mind of Malian diplomacy, the Moratorium is not a legal ban designed to infringe on the sovereignty of States and their freedom to provide defence, but rather it is an act of faith showing the world the unswerving political commitment of our States to eradicate the accumulation of death and destruction-dealing devices,

to pursue the economic and social development of our peoples that have been so sorely tested. It is an act of diplomatic intelligence leading to self-censorship, restraint, the temporary abstention of States of the subregion from producing, receiving or exporting weapons, as a necessary preliminary stage to reinforce means of effective security and take positive action related to micro-disarmament in subsequent phases".

Support for the Moratorium is voluntary and is open not only to States of the subregion, but also to all African States. The Moratorium is essentially a confidence-building measure relating to the import, export and manufacture of small arms. To enhance the effectiveness of that Moratorium and to reinforce the capacity of concerned Governments to exercise stricter monitoring of small arms traffic, Governments may take additional steps. The Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development is an additional device that was adopted. I will not dwell on that programme, which was addressed in a statement this morning.

Five years have elapsed since the adoption of the ECOWAS Moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons. In announcing the Moratorium on 31 October 1998, the heads of State of the Community decided to harm themselves by refraining from importing, exporting or manufacturing small weapons for three years. Those three years would then be used to draw up an inventory of the national arsenal, to create national and community registers. That period was designed to enable the various ECOWAS members to take the steps necessary to protect borders and prevent the illicit circulation of small arms. At the end of that three-year period, an assessment reinforced the conviction of the heads of State that they made the right choice in renewing the Moratorium for three more years.

It is obvious that as long as there is illicit proliferation of small arms in the subregion, peace in ECOWAS will always be precarious. Without being the cause of conflict, small arms nonetheless contribute to exacerbating them. Brawls and small disputes among neighbours, farmers and ranchers frequently become armed conflicts among socio-professional groups or ethnic groups and can spawn civil war or genocide. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons underlies the phenomenon of child soldiers. The massive accumulation of small arms and light weapons has meant that supply exceeds demand. That means that supplies of arms and munitions are very plentiful in times of armed conflict.

The implementation of the Moratorium has made it possible to reduce the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion, with the participation of arms manufacturers. While the circulation of weapons has been slowed down, there are nonetheless 8 million weapons in West Africa remaining in the hands of illegal owners. To prevent any possibility of their misuse, it is necessary to recover these illicit weapons that are illegally held, which contribute to banditry, the creation of armed gangs, criminal cross-border activities and the use of mercenaries. Over the long term, if their firepower permits it, those armed gangs regroup and form mercenary armies willing to do anything to threaten the peace and security of other countries. That is the situation prevailing in our subregion. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire is a perfect illustration of that.

As can be noted, all armed conflicts occur when one party or another feels that it can engage in an armed battle after having stockpiled arms and munitions that they can use or that they have received through a deal with mercenaries. Despite international legal instruments prohibiting the use of mercenaries, it must be noted that they are still relevant because they are now using new information technology, such as the Internet.

To improve the situation of small arms in relation to the use of mercenaries, my delegation would like to make the following suggestions. Embargoes against all countries to a conflict might be envisaged, as could preventive measures imposed against countries responsible for the illicit traffic of weapons. Also of value would be a binding resolution prohibiting the use of mercenaries in all its forms. The provision of additional support to national commissions combating the illicit proliferation of small arms in order to establish additional development projects might also be envisaged.

Unfortunately, our subregion, once a haven of peace, is afflicted by this fever, which is rooted in poverty, unequal distribution of justice, joblessness, unequal distribution of income, bad governance and, finally, a deficit in democracy.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Mali for the kind words she addressed to me and for her suggestions.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): I should like to tell you once again, Sir, how pleased I am to see you presiding over the work of the Security Council.

I believe that the Guinean presidency was right to keep this workshop on the "Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa" in this month's programme of work. It not only concerns an important problem for the subregion, but also, in my delegation's view, is a way of emphasizing the importance that the Council attaches to African issues at a time when all eyes are, of course, turned towards Iraq. Congratulations, therefore, on such tenacity.

I should also like to say how much my delegation appreciates the presence of eminent personalities of the subregion and of regional and subregional organizations, and how useful this discussion is for the future of the subregion. The Secretary-General's participation also represented an important contribution.

Before addressing specific subjects, I should like to say that my delegation appreciates the extremely positive role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on behalf of peace and stability in the subregion. Once again, we should like to express our support for the efforts of ECOWAS to promote peace, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire. In that regard, I should like to thank the current Chairman of ECOWAS, Ghanaian President John Kufuor, and the ECOWAS force in Côte d'Ivoire, who should be fully supported in their efforts by the international community.

It is logical for the Security Council to devote special attention to the problems related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the region of West Africa, because that is one of the world's regions that suffers most from the destabilizing accumulation of such weapons. Bulgaria expresses its grave concern at the excessive accumulation, illicit and uncontrolled proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which continue to be a major challenge to stability and development in West Africa. The uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons intensifies existing ethnic and political tensions, causes considerable loss of human life and weakens the international community's efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to civilian populations.

My country welcomes the integrated approach of the United Nations and of the Security Council aimed at reducing and preventing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as it relates to West Africa.

Bulgaria commends the more active cooperation among the region's countries, which represents an important element in the global strategy aimed at combating the illicit and uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Those countries already possess a tool to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons: the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa, adopted in 1998. The effectiveness and performance of that monitoring mechanism must be improved. My country encourages the countries of the region to implement the recommendations contained in the reports of the groups of experts on Liberia and Sierra Leone and to strengthen the implementation mechanisms, with a view to putting an end to the trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

The international community must lend consistent support to the efforts of the States of the region. It would be useful if the chairmanship of ECOWAS briefed the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1343 (2001) concerning Liberia on the actions that ECOWAS is undertaking to implement the Moratorium on light weapons. That occasion should contribute to the creation of conditions for more effective implementation of the Moratorium. Finally, I should like to say that Bulgaria supports and respects the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa.

The implementation of embargoes in force are also an important element of the global strategy to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in West Africa. We must say that the reports of the groups of experts on Sierra Leone and Liberia reveal similar violation schemes, often orchestrated by the same arms traffickers. As the Council is aware, the destabilizing activities of such individuals are not limited to the region of West Africa but extend far beyond it. My country believes that the Security Council must consider what the best way to tackle this reprehensible phenomenon would be. We believe that a structural change along the lines of the French-British idea of a semi-permanent mechanism is desirable, because that would better contribute to monitoring the

implementation of sanctions imposed by the United Nations.

The second element of our discussion today — the use of mercenaries in armed conflicts — is undeniably a threat to peace in the subregion. Mercenaries play a particularly nefarious role in conflicts in the subregion. We are all fully aware of the harmfulness of the activities of mercenaries in Côte d'Ivoire. The international community must examine and assess recent concentrations of mercenaries in Africa, particularly in the West African region. It is clear that the settlement of conflicts depends on the immediate demobilization of mercenaries.

In conclusion, I should like to say that my delegation fully supports the draft presidential statement that should be adopted following this debate, which is a useful contribution to efforts aimed at eradicating these threats.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Bulgaria for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Niger. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Moutari (Niger) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Mr. President, I should like to pay a warm tribute to the Republic of Guinea, your country, for the excellent work that it has accomplished in the presidency of the Security Council during this period, so critical for international peace and security.

Niger is pleased to see members of the Council devote today to a debate on the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries in West Africa. Her Excellency Ms. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Niger, had wished to be present and to discuss with Council members this issue, whose importance led our heads of State and Government to proclaim, in 1998, a Moratorium on these types of weapons in West Africa. Unfortunately, having been unable to make the trip to New York for scheduling reasons, she asked me to convey to you her friendly greetings and her best wishes for success.

Because of its geographical location and its recent national experience, Niger feels not only that it is an integral part of all initiatives taken in this area but also that the path we have followed, with the benevolent help of countries and friendly institutions, can provide some useful examples within the framework of preventing and resolving conflicts, as well as the consolidation of peace and reconstruction in the post-conflict period.

As the Council knows, Niger is familiar with armed rebellion. It began as early as the 1990s and has affected a substantial portion of our territory, including the northern areas of Aïr and Azawak, and, in the eastern part of the country, Manga.

Our national experience teaches us that, whatever one might say about the illicit proliferation of arms and the use of mercenaries, the pivotal point in the quest for solutions is, first of all, a genuine will on the part of the national protagonists to deal peacefully with the deep-seated reasons for the conflicts they face. Foreign assistance in this way is certainly very useful, even essential, but it is still just assistance. Thanks to an understanding on the part of the different national actors in Niger, peace agreements were signed between April 1995 and August 1998 between the Government and 17 fronts and self-defence movements, with the help of friendly countries, including Algeria, Burkina Faso, France and Chad. These agreements have allowed us to begin the procedure to collect and destroy small arms and light weapons. This procedure finally led to the organization on 15 September 2000 in Agadez of a peace torch, with the presence of United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, to whom I once again would like to convey my deep gratitude.

Then there was the design and implementation of the project to collect small arms and light weapons in the Gigme area in Manga. This was done thanks to help from the United Nations and the group of interested States — Germany, France, Norway and Japan — who were trying to breathe hope into that part of Niger. From its outset, this project was designed and perceived as a pilot project, the success of which would enable us to progress and the experience of which was to be replicated in other parts of the country. It was concerned with places such as Aïr and Azawak, but as it spread out in concentric circles, it was also meant to link with other projects going on in the rest of West Africa so as to ensure that similar initiatives would be eventually implemented in other member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Along these lines, a new project to consolidate peace has just been crafted by Niger, in partnership with the United Nations Development

Programme (UNDP), with the United Nations Volunteers and with French cooperation, in order to reintegrate 3,160 ex-combatants to promote a culture of peace and development in areas affected by conflict.

Our national experience in Niger has thus brought us to a full implementation of peace agreements and to make it a major priority. From this perspective, the socio-economic reintegration of the ex-combatants was a priority for us, without which the peace process could not be successfully concluded, because the feeling of abandonment, due to the fact that financial promises had not been kept, made people impatient, and even fed up. They did not really wish to progress; rather, this led to armed banditry situations. This project, valued at about 1,400 million CFA francs (about $2 million), has been submitted to the donors for their consideration.

In addition, it seems to us that one of the shortcomings that has to be corrected as soon as possible is the weakness of the national structures responsible for follow-up of the collection of small arms and light weapons, as well as the reintegration of ex-combatants and the reconstruction of the affected areas.

Our national commission to collect these weapons, and our high commission for peacekeeping, are cruelly short of human, logistical and financial resources that are essential for them just to carry out the everyday work of their mission. Strengthening national institutions is necessary. It is a basic need for us. The same can be said for the regional level, as Mr. Chambas reminded us this morning.

ECOWAS has an urgent need to establish a small arms unit to provide for the effective implementation of the Moratorium. As was also pointed out by Ambassador Said Djinnit, of the African Union, a Moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of weapons can only function if there is a follow-up oversight mechanism adequately resourced and truly independent; this would allow them to point out and name the violators, as well as impose a sanctions regime against the parties in default.

We truly hope that recommendations will emerge from this workshop that will strengthen the national capacity-building of the national, regional and continental institutions that are to work against the scourges of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries.

Finally, the Regional Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) told us this morning how small the number of resources are that they have to work with, in spite of the ever more urgent needs of the States in the region. It is important, therefore, that one of our recommendations speak specifically to the need for strengthening our financial wherewithal to do our work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Niger for his kind words addressed to me and to my country.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First and foremost, Mr. President, I welcome you to New York in presiding over this important meeting. I also wish to extend a welcome to other Foreign Ministers of African countries and the representatives of regional and subregional organizations. I wish to thank them for their important speeches.

In recent years, the excessive accumulation of and rampant illicit trafficking in small weapons in Africa, especially in West Africa, have aggravated armed conflicts and turmoil in these regions. Through their prolonged presence in these regions, mercenaries have not only been involved in armed conflicts but also have been engaged in the trafficking of arms and the plundering of resources, thus further exacerbating and prolonging the conflicts.

In the absence of an effective resolution of this issue, peace will remain illusive in Africa, especially in West Africa. The international community should give greater attention to this issue and support and assist regional and subregional organizations in combating the illicit trade in small weapons and the use of mercenaries.

The Chinese delegation believes that only an integrated approach, with a regional dimension, can effectively solve the question of small arms and mercenaries in West Africa. Therefore, better coordination and cooperation among members of the community, especially among the West African countries, are of critical importance. As a matter of priority, the countries concerned in this region should, in accordance with the Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the

importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons, develop an update of their domestic legislation on the manufacture, possession, transfer and stockpiling of small arms in their countries, in light of their specific circumstances, and take effective and reliable measures to ensure their scrupulous implementation.

The Security Council should continue to strengthen its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations; actively promote the West African peace process; implement disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in areas of conflict; and strengthen its monitoring of the enforcement of arms embargoes. From a long-term perspective, the international community — while remaining committed to assisting West African countries to eliminate tension and conflict — should actively help the countries of the region to develop their economies, pull themselves out of poverty and achieve sustainable development. That is the only approach capable of resolving the issue of small arms and mercenaries in West Africa at the root level and of restoring and safeguarding peace and security in the subregion.

China has always opposed the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in small arms, as well as the recruitment and use of mercenaries. We have great sympathy for the people of Africa, and especially for those of West Africa, who have long suffered from the proliferation of both small arms and mercenaries. China supports regional and subregional efforts aimed at resolving these issues. We also support strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the countries of the region. We are ready to work with the international community to reach an early and appropriate solution to the question of small arms and mercenaries in West Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of China for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Sierra Leone. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone): I wish to apologize for the absence of the Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone. He was looking forward to attending this meeting. Unfortunately, developments in his schedule did not make it possible for him to be here. I am therefore delivering this short statement on his behalf.

Let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. In so doing, I am fully conscious of the fact that you are occupying the chair during one of the most disturbing — and indeed one of the most critical — periods that the world has faced in the last three decades. My delegation would therefore like to commend you for the admirable manner in which you have been performing your difficult task under extremely tense circumstances.

My delegation welcomes the initiative by Guinea, our good neighbour, to have the Security Council consider two interrelated issues that pose a serious threat to peace, human security and stability in the West African subregion. That initiative is timely because it reminds us of the efficacy of the Security Council, an organ whose primary responsibility is, and remains, the maintenance of international peace and security. Like every other man-made institution, the Council may have weaknesses. That notwithstanding, Sierra Leone continues to have faith in the United Nations as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations. We also have faith in the Council's ability to contribute to our collective effort to prevent, combat and eradicate the menace of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The current situation in the West African subregion compels us to reiterate to the Council and the international community at large that the illicit trade in and proliferation of those weapons, especially among roving bands of rebels that practice their deadly activities within and across national frontiers, is not merely a West African subregional problem. It is a problem that is inherently international. That will be the focus of my short contribution to today's discussions.

We of course realize that it is the responsibility of States of the subregion to take all necessary measures at the national and subregional levels to prevent, combat and eradicate these weapons. However, we cannot, and should not, underestimate the international or global dimension of the problem and its implications for international peace and security. The characteristics of proliferation clearly indicate that national and regional measures are not enough to deal with the problem. Such measures and initiatives must be

strengthened through sustained and effective international cooperation.

Members of the Security Council may wish to comment on this and, if time permits, perhaps suggest how best the Council can further contribute to the implementation of the global measures already identified in the Programme of Action of the 2001 United Nations Conference held to promote the prevention, reduction and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

We acknowledge the critical role that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes play in that regard. In Sierra Leone the success of our disarmament and demobilization of ex-combatants, followed by the equally successful community arms collection and destruction campaign, was due primarily to the level of international assistance and cooperation extended to the Government and people of Sierra Leone. However, I should add that unless such cooperation is accelerated with regard to the reintegration component of the DDR programme, many ex-combatants could easily be recruited to fight in new and ongoing conflicts in the subregion. We recall that the Programme of Action of the 2001 Conference on small arms called for international assistance and cooperation in support of DDR programmes, as well as arms for development projects in post-conflict areas.

Much ground has already been covered with regard to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, which has been extended for a further three-year period. It is obviously in the interest of the member States of ECOWAS to scrupulously implement the Moratorium. The idea of extending it indefinitely or making it a legally binding regional instrument could also be in the interest of the Community. However, the fact is that virtually all the estimated 8 million illicit small arms in circulation in West Africa, including those that are in the hands of rebels, bandits and other non-State entities, were manufactured outside the West African subregion.

Therefore, the implementation of the ECOWAS Moratorium and similar regional initiatives should be seen in the context of continued collaboration between ECOWAS and arms-manufacturing States. The implementation of the Moratorium should also be considered in the context of efforts aimed at securing legally binding international agreements on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons. In the view of my delegation, those are core issues that must be actively pursued if we are to make any significant progress in curbing the illicit transfer and trade in these weapons. As part of the global approach, due consideration should continue to be given to the question of the adequacy of existing machinery to deal with the related problem of brokering.

Recognizing the importance of these issues, the Security Council had requested the Secretary-General to include in last year's report on small arms, among other things, an analytical assessment of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in such areas as availability, lines of supply, brokering, transportation arrangements and financial networks for these weapons. Again, this underscores the fact that the responsibility for dealing with controlling the illicit circulation of these weapons in the West African subregion is not ours alone.

Finally, several speakers have referred to the role of Security Council arms embargoes and similar measures in controlling the proliferation of these weapons. This is one area that falls directly within the responsibility of the Council.

By resolution 1171 (1998) the Government of Sierra Leone was required to mark, register and notify a Security Council monitoring committee of all arms or related material imported by the Government through named points of entry registered with that committee. The Government complied with those requirements. At the same time, the Council prohibited States and their nationals from supplying or selling arms to non-governmental forces in Sierra Leone. However, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement was able to acquire a considerable amount of arms and ammunition to maintain its vicious campaign of death and terror, with the direct and indirect support of a network of international and regional arms dealers. In short, the embargo was deliberately and successfully violated.

All my delegation can say at this stage is that in reviewing any existing arms embargo the Security Council should take into consideration the prevailing situation and any continued serious threat to peace and security in the West African subregion as a whole.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Sierra Leone for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Let me at the outset welcome you, Sir, back amongst us in the Security Council. Your presence here to preside over the debate on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the phenomenon of mercenaries' threats to peace and security in West Africa is one indication of the importance of this issue to the region from which you hail.

I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to the Ministers from several other African States and to the representatives of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

We congratulate Guinea, our brother Ambassador Traoré and you yourself for the initiative to hold this meeting.

It is alarming that 8 million illicit small arms are in circulation in West Africa. Intra-State conflicts have created a staggering demand for small arms and have contributed to the continued proliferation of bandits, rebel groups, mercenaries, child soldiers and militia in the entire subregion. As was succinctly expressed by the Secretary-General in his opening remarks today, these problems sustain conflicts, hinder development, undermine human rights and humanitarian law and exacerbate violence, especially against women and children.

Pakistan was affected by the problem of small arms in the context of the Afghanistan war, which began in 1979. Two years ago, we adopted a comprehensive strategy to control and eliminate this problem. We have had considerable success, although this is not yet complete. Our campaign against illicit arms is continuing, but we would be happy to share our experiences with friendly countries.

We feel that the problems faced by West Africa are complex and multifaceted, affecting stability and peace within and outside individual countries. We need to address peace and stability in the entire subregion, not one country at a time. We agree with the assessment of the Secretary-General that efforts must be made to remove tensions between the concerned countries and also to find ways to collectively address their problems. To this effect, we fully support the efforts that have been made in ECOWAS and urge the United Nations to take a more proactive role to find a comprehensive solution to West Africa's problems.

Efforts must focus on the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. We also endorse several of the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report on small arms, submitted to the Security Council last year in document S/2002/1053.

With the adoption of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons on 1 December 2000, the African Union articulated for the first time a continent-wide strategy for tackling illicit small arms on that continent. Similarly, the renewal by ECOWAS of its Moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons last year is a sincere effort to address the issue.

The ECOWAS Moratorium can be strengthened through several of the recommendations that are reflected in the draft presidential statement before us, that is, through transparency, better end-user certificates, effective implementation of United Nations sanctions and well-conceived disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. Arms-producing and exporting countries should also enact stringent laws and regulations to ensure that their exports to West Africa do not contribute to destabilizing the region. The implementation of DDR programmes in the affected countries needs generous financial support of the donor community.

We are facing what one could call a series of complex crises in West Africa and elsewhere. It is obvious that only a comprehensive approach that takes into account social, economic, political, security and other factors can address effectively the problems associated with small arms and light weapons. The international community should help deal with the complex causes of instability in West Africa. In particular, the economic and social problems afflicting the region must be tackled through comprehensive support for development, greater market access, debt relief, enhanced official development assistance, human resources development and a focused effort to eradicate HIV/AIDS.

We at the United Nations, and especially in the Security Council, need to devise a new composite method and a composite approach that draws together all those who can contribute to solutions to these complex crises in one place. I suggest that we discuss this composite approach in the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, which already exists.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words addressed to my country and my delegation.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): Mr. President, I bring you warm greetings from your colleague, Mr. Alhaji Sule Lamido, Foreign Minister of Nigeria, who is unavoidably absent from this meeting. I wish to thank you on behalf of the Nigerian delegation for your initiative in organizing this important workshop. It affords the Security Council an excellent opportunity to fully address the menace posed by small arms and the use of mercenaries in the West African subregion. We look forward to a successful and fruitful conclusion of the workshop under your able guidance — and that is already near.

The problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is of particular concern to Nigeria because it constitutes a major impediment to peace, stability, security and economic development in many developing countries, especially in Africa. These arms continue to have devastating consequences on the African continent, considering their capacity to fuel, intensify and prolong conflicts. Sir, you are no doubt aware of the millions of lives lost, as well as the humanitarian crisis created in the region, as a result of their illicit use. I need not mention the destruction of catastrophic proportions of economic and social infrastructure on the continent as a direct result of the illicit use of these weapons. We know how long and how expensive it often is to put up such structures.

The West African subregion has more than its fair share of these conflicts. These conflicts have been fuelled by the illicit and free circulation of these weapons in the subregion.

The greatest difficulty in the control of the proliferation of small arms is their easy accessibility to non-State actors. That was an issue that dogged the outcome of the General Assembly debate on small arms and light weapons in 2001. My delegation therefore believes that for an adequate and effective control of the proliferation of this class of weapons, efforts must be made to legally control the sale of these weapons to non-State actors.

The illicit trade in small arms has always obstructed the implementation of arms embargoes imposed by the Security Council. The recent establishment of an independent panel of experts and monitoring mechanisms by the Council to promote compliance with arms embargoes is welcome.

While in West Africa this measure will be useful in controlling the illegal cross-border movement of small arms into conflict areas, it will be, however, ineffective in controlling and eliminating those arms that are already inside the areas of conflict. We therefore emphasize the need for effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration mandates that include weapons collection, disposal and destruction.

In order to trace the flow of small arms and light weapons from their sources, it is necessary to identify the points of diversion into illicit networks. Tracing the movement of these weapons will help to promote awareness and accountability in arms transfers and will deter their illicit transfer to non-State actors. We welcome the recommendation of the Secretary-General to develop an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons that enter their countries so that they can effectively control such inflows. We hope that the ongoing work of the group of experts on tracing small arms will ultimately lead to a legally-binding international agreement on the subject.

As an additional measure in ensuring success in this regard, it is important that licensed manufacturers apply appropriate and reliable markings on each small arm and light weapon as an integral part of the production process, as stipulated in the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Efforts should be put in place to ensure that the United Nations Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, which was successfully concluded in 2001, will complement the Programme of Action in this vital area when it enters into force.

Recent studies have shown that arms brokering plays a significant role in the illicit arms trade. The establishment of an effective international regime to control the practice has therefore become necessary. We call on Member States to fully abide by their commitment to enhance international cooperation and the exchange of information as a prelude to the establishment of such a regime. That position was underscored in the 2000 Bamako Ministerial Declaration containing Africa's common position on small arms and light weapons.

This is connected with the issue of licensing and end-user controls. We believe that developing effective national, regional and international controls on export licensing and end use are crucial elements in ensuring that this trade remains under Government control and is not diverted to illicit markets or end users. In that regard, my delegation urges the Security Council to encourage States that have not already done so to introduce the use of authenticated end-user certificates as a means of monitoring the export and transit of small arms.

It is equally important for the Council to intensify efforts to investigate and to identify the link between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources. The determination of this linkage and the efforts to control the use of proceeds from illegal resources to fund the illicit arms trade have significantly brought the conflicts in the West African subregion to a successful end. Such investigation should of necessity apply to all areas of conflict in the West African subregion, where there is often interlinkage between one conflict situation and another.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa has been in existence since 1998, following its renewal two years ago. ECOWAS member States will continue their best effort to ensure the success of the Moratorium. It is unfortunate that conflict situations have persisted in the West African subregion in spite of the Moratorium. ECOWAS member States need the cooperation of the international community to implement the Moratorium. My delegation therefore wishes once again to call on the international community to support the implementation of the Moratorium. In order to succeed, it is important that the Moratorium is fully respected by all States, both within and outside the subregion. We also urge other regions to follow the example of ECOWAS by imposing similar moratoriums in their respective regions.

Nigeria has always believed in conflict prevention measures and the pursuit of negotiated solution to conflicts as the most effective means of solving the small arms problem. The international community should pay particular attention to the need to adopt these measures as the best strategy for peace. Connected to this is the need for the creation of a good political atmosphere that will enhance harmonious relationships in our countries and a sense of belonging. The emphasis in this regard should be on promoting structures and processes that strengthen democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance, as well as economic recovery and growth as a means of eliminating conflicts and guaranteeing durable peace. The task of the Security Council in this regard is quite enormous and calls for genuine commitment and concerted action on the part of the Council.

I cannot conclude this statement without expressing our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his bold initiative in establishing the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) as a mechanism for the harmonization of the activities of United Nations agencies to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action. CASA has a special role to play in promoting and coordinating assistance to West African States, especially those most severely affected by small arms proliferation. We also note with satisfaction the recent establishment of the Small Arms Advisory Services to provide advisory services and formulate programmes on small arms for implementation. As these two bodies rely on extrabudgetary resources to fund their activities, we call on Member States in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions to enable them to fulfil their mandates.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Côte d'Ivoire. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Djangone-Bi (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): First let me say that my delegation is very happy to see you, Sir, presiding over the work of the

Security Council in March 2003, which has witnessed the establishment of the Government of National Reconciliation under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

Things have never been so difficult for the international community, as current challenges, to which pressures are added, are numerous and seem insurmountable.

However, assured by your excellent qualities of diplomatic experience, we do not doubt for one moment that the proceedings of this distinguished institution will be completed successfully.

We would also like to congratulate the representative of Germany who, last month, conducted the work of the Council with the great competence we know he possesses.

I would like to begin my statement by saying that my delegation approves of most of the recommendations that have been made, particularly those by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Senegal and Benin. Since almost everything has already been said, I will confine my statement to a few words about the existence of so-called Liberian fighters supposedly in the Côte d'Ivoire army. In fact, this morning, in his statement to the Security Council, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia stated, without providing a shred of evidence and in spite of the denial of the Government of Côte d'Ivoire that was published by a number of press agencies, that particularly in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire, Liberian mercenaries were fighting alongside the national army of Côte d'Ivoire.

It is highly regrettable that Liberia has turned this workshop that has been so carefully organized into a trial against Côte d'Ivoire. In a spirit of peace, and despite the averred collusion of fraternal countries with the aggressors against Côte d'Ivoire, my country has not deemed it necessary to pour oil on the fire by publicly denouncing anybody. We are trying to prepare the post-crisis period, given that teeth and tongues are condemned to live together, in spite of the accidents along the way.

Given the falsehoods related by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia aimed at distracting the international community, my delegation would like to issue the following clarification.

We do not know the sources of the representative of Liberia. However, the truth is that Liberian mercenaries are part of the aggressors against Côte d'Ivoire and have been since the night of 18 to 19 September 2002. All the diplomatic Missions were able to see on Ivorian television Liberian mercenaries, among others, that the national armed forces had taken prisoners after heavy fighting. Some of those mercenaries even admitted that they belonged to the Liberian army. President Charles Taylor assured President Gbagbo that those mercenaries had no connection with the Liberian army. The Ivorian authorities noted that. At any rate, if they are not soldiers of the Liberian army, then they are Liberian mercenaries.

There can be no doubt, because the English accent of Liberia is quite different from that of the other anglophone countries in West Africa. The majority of those mercenaries can be easily confused with the border populations of Côte d'Ivoire, given that they speak the same languages and are part of the same ethnic groups as those populations.

To then say that Liberia mercenaries are Ivorians is a large step to take — a step that the critics of Côte d'Ivoire, including the Minister, blithely took.

My delegation vigorously protests such fabrications that attempt to present the victim of aggression, Côte d'Ivoire, as being the culprit in this matter.

A number of Liberian mercenaries have come from the ranks of armed groups that are trying to overthrow President Taylor's regime. Those Liberian mercenaries, who have fanned out across West Africa and are currently aggressing against Côte d'Ivoire, can be defined in terms of the following paradigm. First, they are, for the most part, totally under the control of a drug empire. Secondly, they are merciless. Thirdly, they systematically pillage plantations, houses, and so forth.

Fourthly, they kill indiscriminately; one could even say that they kill for the fun of it, which explains why there are so many mass grave sites in rebel areas. Fifthly, they have no regard for women and girls, whom they rape on a daily basis.

The Liberian Ministry of Foreign Affairs certainly forgot that since that fraternal country has been unstable — which has been for at least a decade — Côte d'Ivoire has taken in refugees; at times half a million people have been accepted. The United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees can testify to that.

There is one specific thing that should be pointed out. Contrary to what is done elsewhere, instead of putting people into camps in Côte d'Ivoire, Liberian refugees are received by families and integrated into the population. At the meeting in Serta, Libya, my country was congratulated by the African Union for that hospitality, which was described as being second to none.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia certainly forgot to point out to the Security Council that, for more than a decade, the combatants of the various factions fleeing the fighting were coming into Ivorian territory with their supplies of arms and have largely contributed to the insecurity that is undermining my country today, and which is characterized by ambushes, hold-ups and other acts.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia certainly does not know that, before the aggression that we are talking about, Côte d'Ivoire did not hesitate to send regular teams of military doctors and medicines to Liberia.

The list is long. Therefore, allow my delegation to conclude with the following. Contrary to partisan reports that have been made to the Council by actors who are destabilizing Côte d'Ivoire, first, Liberian mercenaries that are spreading desolation in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire have no connection with the regular army; they should in no way be considered as extra recruits of the national armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire. Secondly, in the western part of the country, as well as at Bouaké, Liberian mercenaries, recruited and paid by the aggressors against Côte d'Ivoire, are fighting alongside and are on the payroll of the latter.

Thirdly, Liberian thieves are acting independently, profiting from this situation in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire. Fourthly, Liberian mercenaries arrested by the French forces in the region of Duekoué Bangolo have no connection with the regular forces of Côte d'Ivoire. That is the truth that the international community should know.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Côte d'Ivoire for the kind words he addressed to me.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guinea.

In the historic Declaration of the Millennium Summit, the world's leaders, meeting here in New York, affirmed their willingness to work to establish a climate of peace and security, the fundamental basis for a partnership for sustainable development. Today, we must recognize that the international community seems to demonstrate a certain impotence in the face of numerous human tragedies and the destruction of socio-economic infrastructures, the consequences of the persistence of many flashpoints of tension in the world.

For more than a decade, West Africa, the theatre of several conflicts, has been a subject of great concern because of its disturbing number of refugees and displaced persons. The causes of this instability have been diagnosed many times, but the remedies have not always been applied to restore peace and calm for the people of the subregion. Today, the constantly growing number of unemployed youth and the consequences of conflicts are fertile ground for the development of this phenomenon. The use of child soldiers also results from these deep-seated causes.

Faced with this new threat, what remedies should be proposed to eradicate this scourge? Undoubtedly, the domestic conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and recently in Côte d'Ivoire have had deplorable consequences, both for those countries and for neighbouring States, jeopardizing the subregional balance.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the increasingly frequent recourse to mercenarism are unlikely to enhance the restoration of peace and security in West Africa. The Ivorian crisis is an unfortunate illustration. While it is recognized that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is not in itself the cause of these armed conflicts, it has nonetheless been established that it helps to exacerbate them. The joining of such proliferation with the use of mercenaries today constitutes factors of destabilization and insecurity in West Africa.

The holding of this interactive workshop has been to the point, because it has undoubtedly enabled us to measure the impact of these scourges and to provide the necessary incentives to eradicate them. In other words, we must proceed to an in-depth consideration of the mechanisms that underlie these phenomena, and we must adopt appropriate measures with a view to both prevention and elimination.

The conclusions of previous studies and debates on these issues confirm the gravity of the danger and the scope of the damage caused in West Africa in particular. It is, in fact, deplorable to note that 500 million light weapons are circulating freely in the world — 30 million of them in Africa and 8 million in West Africa. Even worse, 60 per cent of these weapons are held by civilians, of whom approximately 500,000 die each year; 80 per cent of these victims are women and children.

That somber tableau surely explains the feeling that, in Africa, guns are not only weapons of choice, but weapons with devastating effects. My delegation is concerned by the uncontrolled and abusive use of small arms and light weapons, which affect the public resources of our States — already very limited — and the implementation of development programmes. We are of the view that this form of governance has as its corollary the flight of foreign capital and disinvestment.

Moreover, we must recognize that the moderate cost of these weapons and the fact that they are easy to use and to acquire explain their possession by everyone, including children, who are often recruited against their will for armed conflicts. Guinea subscribes to the view that these conditions dangerously compromise the implementation of peace agreements in the subregion, whose failure is often attributed solely to the absence of political will. How, in fact, can those agreements be effectively implemented when the subregion is more concerned with its safety and stability? Taking that factor into account is a matter of moral fairness.

We admit that, besides the weak capacity of security forces, unemployment and poverty promote the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In that regard, several initiatives have been undertaken, in vain, to eradicate this scourge. In October 1998, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a Declaration of Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa for a renewable three-year period. In order to accelerate implementation of the Moratorium, an action plan for the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) was adopted in March 1999, thanks to the cooperation of the United Nations system. Despite the slowness observed in the establishment of national commissions, years after the adoption of the Moratorium, some progress deserves to be emphasized: to date, 13 national commissions have been created. Nevertheless, increased assistance by the United Nations system is required to make them more operational.

We understand that the difficulties encountered in the effective functioning of the ECOWAS Moratorium are also attributable to the absence of effective and efficient cooperation among States to harmonize their policies; to insufficient personnel and equipment at the ECOWAS secretariat level to oversee implementation of the Moratorium; and to the absence of binding legal provisions.

Therefore, my delegation remains convinced that we need to strengthen the subregion's institutional capacities, ensuring a long-term fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, by taking the following elements into account: the introduction of a standardized end-user certificate in the subregion; the broadening of the Moratorium with the goal of creating a mechanism for the exchange of information on all types of weapons acquired by the States of the subregion, as well as on deliveries made by the countries exporting them; the computerization of aircraft registration lists, in conformity with the provisions of the International Civil Aviation Organization Convention of 1944; the elaboration of national action plans; the increased involvement of national commissions and of local structures in the implementation of measures taken at the subregional, regional and international levels; and finally, the strengthening of unity of action to break the mafia mechanisms that feed weapons trafficking.

Guinea, for its part, has taken the following measures: the creation of a national commission on 18 August 2000; the elaboration of an action plan based on the nine priorities defined by PCASED; the introduction of legislation and of administrative procedures on arms possession, soon to be adopted; the establishment of a training and awareness programme for the Guinean army; and the holding of numerous symposiums, seminars and workshops and participation in those types of events with a view to gradually establishing a true culture of peace. Regardless of such efforts, the hoped-for success will essentially depend on the considerations that we have just cited.

My delegation notes — and deplores — the fact that people without faith or law, whose sole motivation

is enrichment, are selling their services today to parties in the same conflict. Members will agree with me that the degrading use of mercenaries has made the security situation of our States — already so worrisome — even more fragile. It has been proved that these mercenaries are, more and more often, turning soullessly against their own employers. That is to say, the common enemy of the States of the subregion is now mercenary activity. We must denounce those who order it or permit it. We must not forget that these mercenaries operate in motley groups of various nationalities, sometimes nurtured by former combatants who have never been taken in charge by disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

My country, the Republic of Guinea, has paid a heavy price for the use of mercenaries. It was the victim of aggressions in November 1970 and in September 2000, which enabled us to measure the danger of mercenary activity to a country's stability and security.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to invite the Security Council to ensure scrupulous compliance by all States of the subregion with measures taken against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the use of mercenaries. Therefore, it is essential that our States give due consideration to the recommendations and observations that have resulted from this workshop, with a view to combating these scourges — an undeniable reality — and to ensuring a better future for coming generations.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to the Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED), and I would ask him to give us a very brief assessment of our workshop.

Mr. Fall (*spoke in French*): I would like to start by commenting on the new recommendations having to do with the Plan of Action that has been drawn up and then list them in terms of the entities that would have to act to implement them. I think I would start by saying that the international community recognizes not only the importance of security in West Africa but also, unfortunately, the threats that have been highlighted here, in particular the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenaries.

Still, with respect to the international community, I think there is a need for it to support the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons — first of all, by supporting the national commissions responsible for this issue; secondly, by helping the Secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to strengthen its capacity in this domain; and, finally, of course, by coordinating development assistance within the United Nations system.

As regards the Council itself, we have noted the idea of having an embargo on light weapons in conflict areas. I think this was an early initiative launched here at a Security Council ministerial-level meeting by Mrs. Madeline Albright, former Secretary of State of the United States of America. I think this idea has come up again, and we should note it, while at the same time penalizing the mercenary operations in West Africa.

I also note the willingness to contain mercenary activities and proliferation through the adoption of appropriate legal instruments. Of course, the Security Council would need the assistance of the Conference on light weapons as regards the definition of standards and so forth.

Finally, there was mention of developing independent mechanisms, evaluation and sanctions. Of course, this mission would naturally fall under the auspices of the Security Council.

At the subregional level, specifically for PCASED and ECOWAS, two things are very important: improving the procedure for monitoring of import controls and the end-user certificates, and starting in the next semester, we will look at reviewing and improving these procedures as part of our agenda.

Finally, as regards ECOWAS, PCASED and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) together, I see the need to evaluate risks in the subregion and to report annually on arms trade flows and mercenary activities in the region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Director of the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development (PCASED) for his contribution.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2003/328, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Angola, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1467 (2003).

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. I now invite Council members to informal consultations on Iraq, immediately following the adjournment of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.